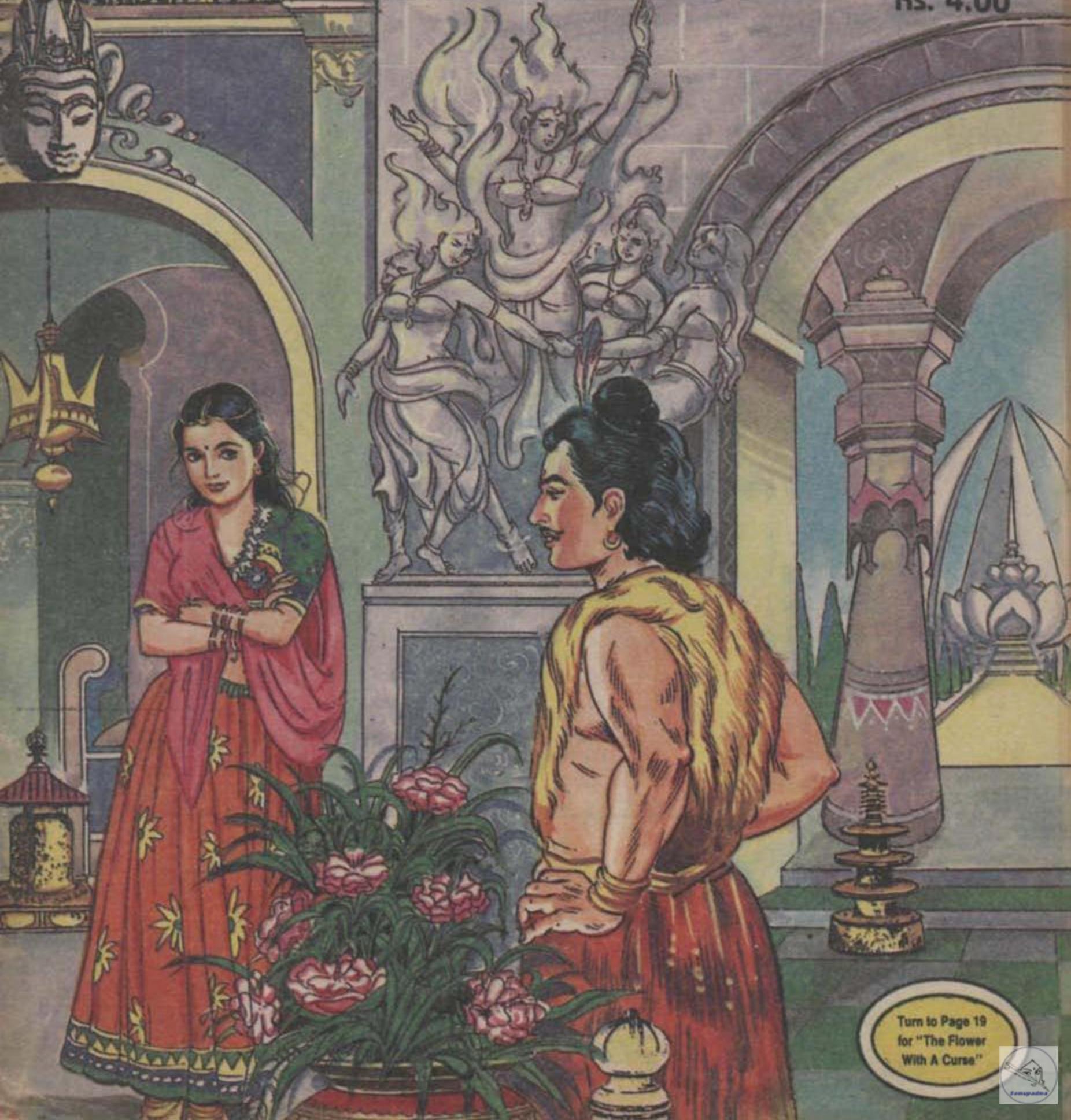


CHANDAMAMA

DECEMBER 1993

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Turn to Page 19
for "The Flower
With A Curse"



SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES



Answers:

1. The number of petals in the flowers are more.
2. The parrot's beak is open.
3. The girl's eyes are open.
4. The girl is smiling.
5. The girl's hands are placed on her hips.
6. There are mango bites kept in the plate.
7. The girl's dress has a stud on her front.
8. The dog's tongue is hanging out.
9. The plate has a red stripe around its neck.
10. There are mango bites kept in the plate.





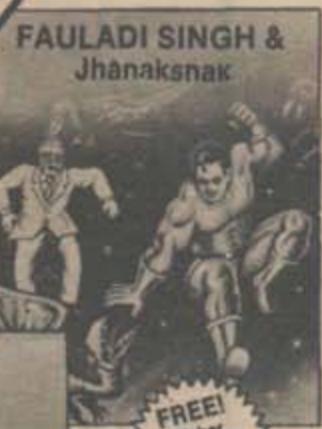
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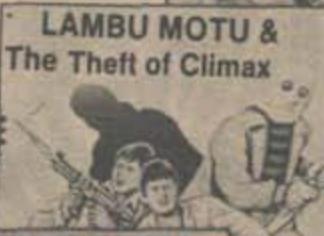
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for milk. C for Cool, C for Caramilk.
Cowboy, C for Caramilk. C for Co., C fo
milk. C for Cowboy, C for Caramil C fo
for Caramilk. C for Cowboy, C for Caram
Clown, C for Caramilk. C for Cowboy, C
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IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 24 DECEMBER 1993 No. 6

Stories:

The Flower With A Curse-9	...Page 19
The Farmer Meets His Match	...Page 30
All Because Of A Kick!	...Page 37
Veer Hanuman-39	...Page 45
Poems For Pleasure	..Page 53

Picture Stories :

He Took A 'Ghost'	
Of A Pen-name	...Page 12
Panchatantra-36	...Page 14

Features :

Nobel Prize For One-time Foes	...Page 10
World of Nature	...Page 27
Sports Snippets	...Page 28
Supplement-62-	...Page 33
Mother Earth	...Page 61

**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 24 JANUARY 1994 No. 7

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : King Mahendra Varma of Nagapura arranges for Captain Veerendrakumar to accompany the tribal youth from Maninagar, Thangal, to meet the monster and entice him with 'Shatabdika'. The journey is called off when Princess Mallika reports the theft of the flowers from her chamber. Chieftain Kabui, rushes to the palace to inform the king about the flowers missing from his house. The king and Commander Arjun Singh are perplexed over the theft, which they conclude, is a well-planned effort to thwart the journey into the sea. Has the monster gained an entry into Nagapura to get at the flowers? If so, he has not caused any havoc or destruction as had taken place in Maninagar. Who else wants to steal the flowers?

VEER HANUMAN : The people of Ayodhya are threatened by the Rakshasa, Lavanasa. Rama sends Satrughna to deal with him. He returns victorious. Sage Agastya arrives to complain against Satakandha. As one has to cross several seas to reach him, Rama decides to send Hanuman to go and kill him. Hanuman suggests that Rama himself should kill Satakandha and offers to take Rama on his shoulders.

PLUS all your favourites, including yet another Panchatantra story in colourful comics.

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Controlling Editor.
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A Golden Rule for All Faiths

'We must treat others as we wish others to treat us.' This was the exhortation made by the second Parliament of World Religions held in September in Chicago, which was the venue of the first Parliament held exactly a hundred years ago. That unique world meet was made memorable by one of India's representatives—Swami Vivekananda.

Nearly 125 representatives of the world's major religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism—participating in the second Parliament, signed a Declaration of Global Ethics, which has given the "golden rule" quoted above for the followers of all religions to adhere to.

The declaration, besides, advocates solving of conflicts through non-violent methods, a respect for nature, and equality between the sexes. The nine-page document has avoided the word 'god' even for once. Those who drafted the document thought, and wisely too, that a mention of god might exclude those religions which do not recognise any one supreme being.

This very much aligns with Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of the unity of mankind. The code of ethics, the Dalai Lama emphasised at the Parliament, might help resolve some of the world's problems, as it believes in the power of faith in pursuit of world peace.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ had said: "Give unto others as you would wish them give unto you." It is a pity that the present-day leaders of religions had to remind us of that simple dictum, though couched in different words.



A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

Nobel Prize for one-time foes



All eyes are on Oslo, the capital of Norway and the seat of the Nobel Prizes Committee. This happens in December every year. However, on December 10 this year, eyes the world over will certainly strain to watch on their TV sets the tear-filled eyes of the distinguished gathering who will witness a historic ceremony. Theirs will be tears of joy. Two leaders, whom the world holds in high esteem, will receive this year's Nobel Peace Prize. They are the President of South Africa, Mr. F.W. De Klerk, and the President of the African National Congress, Mr. Nelson Mandela.

What prompted the Nobel Committee to choose these one-time arch enemies for the Peace Prize? A casual reading of the history of South Africa will tell you that the country had, for the past one hundred years, adopted the policy of 'apartheid' and followed racial discrimination. The government of South Africa, dominated by the white settlers, imposed a lot of restrictions on the blacks—the original inhabitants—who formed the majority of the population. They had no voice in government; their movements were confined to certain areas; they were given no facilities for improving their economic conditions, educational progress, or general development. They were denied any share in the prosperity enjoyed by the country.

How long would they brook a life of repression, of ignominy? Naturally voices rose demanding justice, freedom, and equality. They found in Nelson Mandela a leader who would espouse their cause. In 1960, he formed the guerrilla wing of the African National Congress with the aim of establishing a democratic, non-



racial South Africa. Soon after he launched the black struggle, he was taken into custody, branded a terrorist, and put in prison where he remained, incarcerated, for 27 long, "lonely and wasted" years. This period has been described as "a marvel of dignified survival against the blind fury of racist hatred" and is often compared to the non-violent struggle for freedom which Gandhiji led in India.

Meanwhile, the struggle by the blacks continued; the rulers, too, changed. In 1989, Mr. De Klerk, a lawyer like Mr. Mandela, became President. He had a different vision of South Africa, and began dismantling the apartheid laws of race discrimination and white privilege. He also offered the blacks a role in government. They accepted the offer, but they wanted their leader released, unconditionally. This took place in 1990.

Mr. Nelson Mandela came out of prison without a trace of bitterness. He made it clear that his aim was the same as that of 27 years ago. His political credo was 'majority rule' and *not* 'black majority rule'. He immediately began negotiations with the white regime to reach an agreement regarding a peaceful transition to a new political order based on the principle of one man— one vote.

Three years of dialogues between the white government and the ANC as well as other black organisations have overcome centuries of distrust, paving the way for democracy.

Though the peace moves were punctuated by instances and incidents of violence, the two leaders continued to work for laying the foundation for a new democratic South Africa. This was what attracted the attention of the Nobel Committee members.

When the award was announced, Mr. De Klerk said: "It is a great honour and I accept it with great humility." Mr. Mandela remarked: "The Nobel Prize is a tribute to *all* South Africans." Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town, who had won the same prize in 1984, commented: "The joint award to two such different men is appropriate."

One can expect tears of joy in all those who will be privileged to watch the two leaders as they go up the rostrum to receive the award.

Other Prize winners this year

Literature: TONI MORRISON—an African-American woman writer of *Lorian*, Ohio, U.S.A.

Medicine: Dr. RICHARD J. ROBERTS, U.K., and Dr. PHILLIP A. SHARP, U.S.A.

Physics: Mr. RUSSELL A. HULSE and Prof. JOSEPH H. TAYLOR, both of U.S.A.

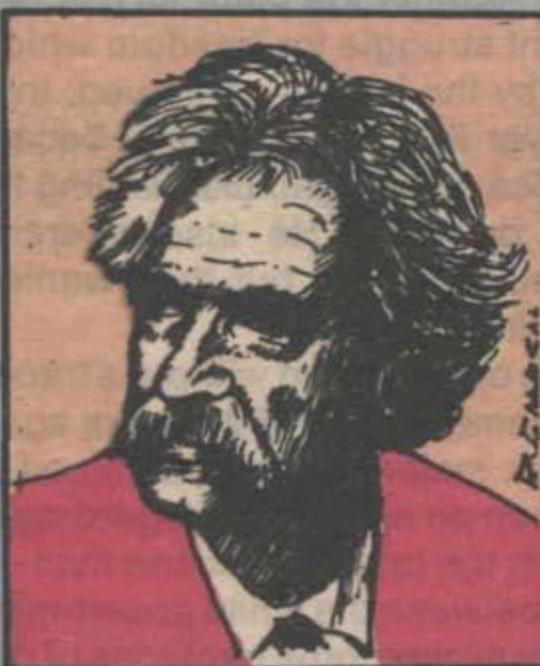
Chemistry: Mr. KARY B. MULLIS, U.S.A., and Mr. MICHAEL SMITH, Canada

Economics: Prof. ROBERT W. FOGEL and Prof. DOUGLASS C. NORTH, both of U.S.A.



He took a 'ghost' of a pen-name

The famous U.S. humorist Mark Twain wrote two books for children—*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Both books—avidly read even by adults—claim to have brought more joy and laughter to people of all nationalities than any other books.



Now, Mark Twain is a pen-name. And, as Shakespeare would say, thereby hangs a tale! Samuel Langhorne Clemens became private secretary to his brother who was then in charge of Nevada Territory, rich in gold deposits. Whenever he was not mining for gold, Samuel wrote articles in a Virginia City newspaper, which attracted considerable attention.

The editor of *Enterprise* offered him the job of a reporter and, as he was now almost penniless, Samuel accepted the offer. He was to report on the proceedings of the Territorial Legislature. They were widely read, and the editor suggested he now used a pen-name. An acquaintance called Isaiah Sellers, using the pseudonym Mark Twain, had just then died and Samuel thought the pen-name was striking. An article under this name appeared on February 2, 1863. This is probably the only instance in the world of literature of someone

borrowing the pen-name of a dead person!

Samuel's family had to move from Missouri to Mississippi under trying circumstances. In their new place, Samuel, who was just a boy then, met Tom Blankensap, after whom he fashioned that lovable character, Huckleberry Finn.

One day, the two caught a raccoon—a bear-like animal—and skinned it. They took it to a dealer, who paid a pittance of 10 cents. The boys felt cheated. They saw the man throwing the skin into a back room which had a window, and that was open. Samuel climbed in, took hold of the skin and re-entered the shop. The dealer paid 10 cents. The exercise was repeated several times. When the dealer went in to check how many skins he had by then bought, he found there was only one! The boys knew they had by then made enough money and disappeared from the scene.

Mark Twain was born on November 30, 1835. It was a memorable day, as Halley's Comet had made its appearance that very day. Later in life, he used to joke: "I came with Halley's Comet; I reckon I'll go with it!" And he almost did on April 21, 1910—two days after the comet made its once-in-75 years appearance.



Three-year prodigy



studied only up to class 9 and 10, they wish their daughter is in more competent, capable hands.

NEWS FLASH

Three-year-old Meenakshi, of Raiwalan, near Dehra Dun in Uttar Pradesh, is the latest find of a child prodigy. She reads newspapers with ease, can write sentences in a neat, well formed hand, and does two-digit multiplications without as much as batting an eyelid. Father Havildar Patra and mother Manjusha are elated, and sad, too, because no school is admitting Meenakshi. Though a gifted child, she is not yet five and government rules cannot be relaxed, they are told. They diligently teach her at home, but having themselves

Ate his own flesh

A 14-year-old Mexican boy survived by eating flesh from his right arm till he was rescued. Bernabe Acosta suffered serious burns. Whether he was hit by lightning or had accidentally touched a high-tension wire is yet to be ascertained. Rescuers reached him several days later and were told that he overcame starvation by eating flesh from his right arm which was charred in the accident.

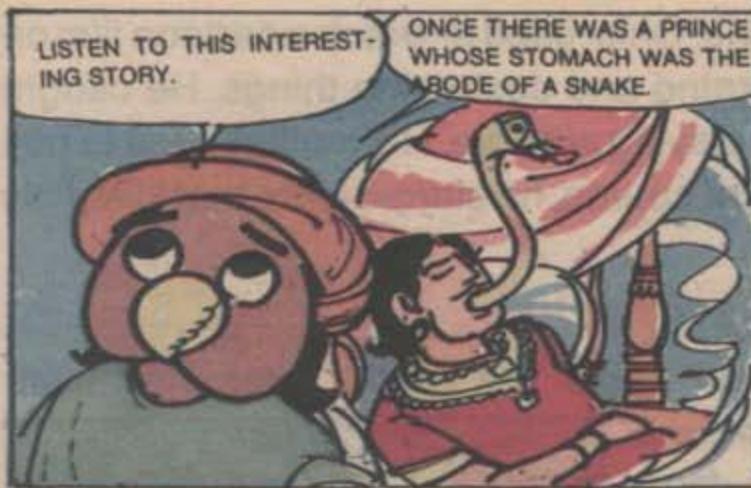
Fire was fun, till....

Five-year-old Austin Messner of Moraine, Ohio, used to watch a cartoon film on the TV, which shows two teen-agers burning and destroying things. He caught hold of a match-box and found it was fun playing with fire. His mother used to pull him up, but fire had caught his fancy—till, of course, he started a fire that killed his baby sister.

Rescue by sniffer dog

An 18-month-old baby girl lay trapped under the rubble after the recent earthquake in Maharashtra razed to the ground Mangrur village. She lay there for full four days, when a sniffer dog brought by the 38-member rescue team from France sensed human presence underneath. The team removed 8 ft of debris before they could retrieve the babe in an unconscious condition.





To think of the evil of begging is itself enough to melt one's heart; but to think of refusal of alms is enough to break it.

— Thirukkural

AFTER SOME DAYS, HE REACHED A LONELY PLACE.



THIS PLACE LOOKS PEACEFUL. I'LL STAY HERE!



NOW, THE RULER THERE HAD TWO DAUGHTERS. THE ELDER ONE WOULD ALWAYS BOW TO HIM AND GREET HIM.



VICTORY AND GLORY TO YOU! O KING!

THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER WOULD INSTEAD SAY...



LET GOD BESTOW ON YOU WHAT YOU DESERVE, O KING!

STOP THAT! I'VE ENOUGH OF YOUR NONSENSE, YOUNG LADY!



NOW YOU'RE GOING TO GET WHAT YOU DESERVE! TEACH HER A LESSON? MARRY HER TO A BEGGAR!



AFTER SOME TIME... THE KING'S MEN AND THE PRINCESS REACHED A DILAPIDATED PLACE.



SIR, SEE THERE! HE LOOKS LIKE A BEGGAR!

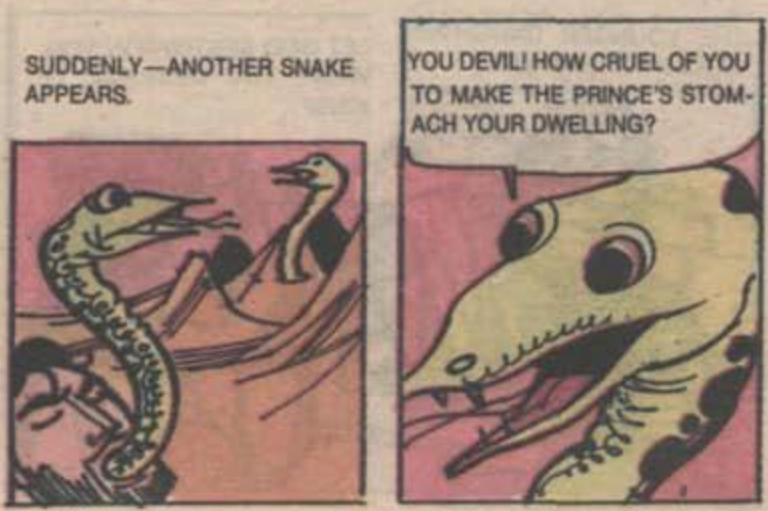
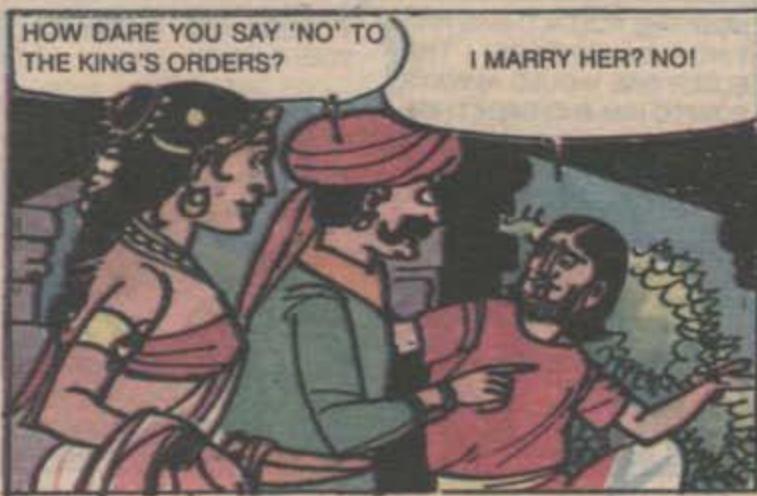
THE KING ORDERS THAT YOU SHOULD MARRY HIS DAUGHTER!

WHAT? ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? NO, PLEASE! LEAVE ME ALONE!



People will eagerly seek the friendship of the prosperous man who has raised his family without foul means.





As the body is the abode of the spirit, so is the excellence of modesty the abode of perfection.

IF THE POOR PRINCE HAPPENS TO KNOW THAT HE CAN END



YOUR LIFE BY DRINKING MUSTARD, HE WOULD NOT SUFFER LIKE THIS.



NO ONE KNOWS THAT A BIG TREASURE IS HIDDEN IN YOUR HOME. JUST A POTFUL OF BOILING WATER ON YOUR ANT-HILL WILL PUT AN END TO YOUR LIFE.



THANK GOD! NOW I CAN SAVE MY HUSBAND!



PRAKARAKARNA CONCLUDES THE STORY...



THE PRINCESS WHO HEARD THE CONVERSATION OF THE SNAKES POURED BOILING WATER ON THE ANT-HILL AND KILLED THE SNAKE.

SHE THEN GAVE MUSTARD TO HER HUSBAND AND DESTROYED THE SNAKE IN HIS STOMACH.



SHE LIVED HAPPILY WITH HER HUSBAND, TAKING THE TREASURE FROM THE ANT-HILL.



LIKE THE SNAKE IN THIS STORY, THE OLD CROW MAY GIVE US VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS FOR DESTROYING OUR ENEMY.



ALL RIGHT! THE OLD CROW SHALL LIVE.

BUT RAKTHAKSHA DID NOT APPROVE OF THE KING'S DECISION...



ARE YOU REAL COUNSELLORS? YOU'VE MISLED THE KING. YOU'LL BRING DISASTER TO HIM AND HIS KINGDOM. THIS REMINDS ME OF A STORY...

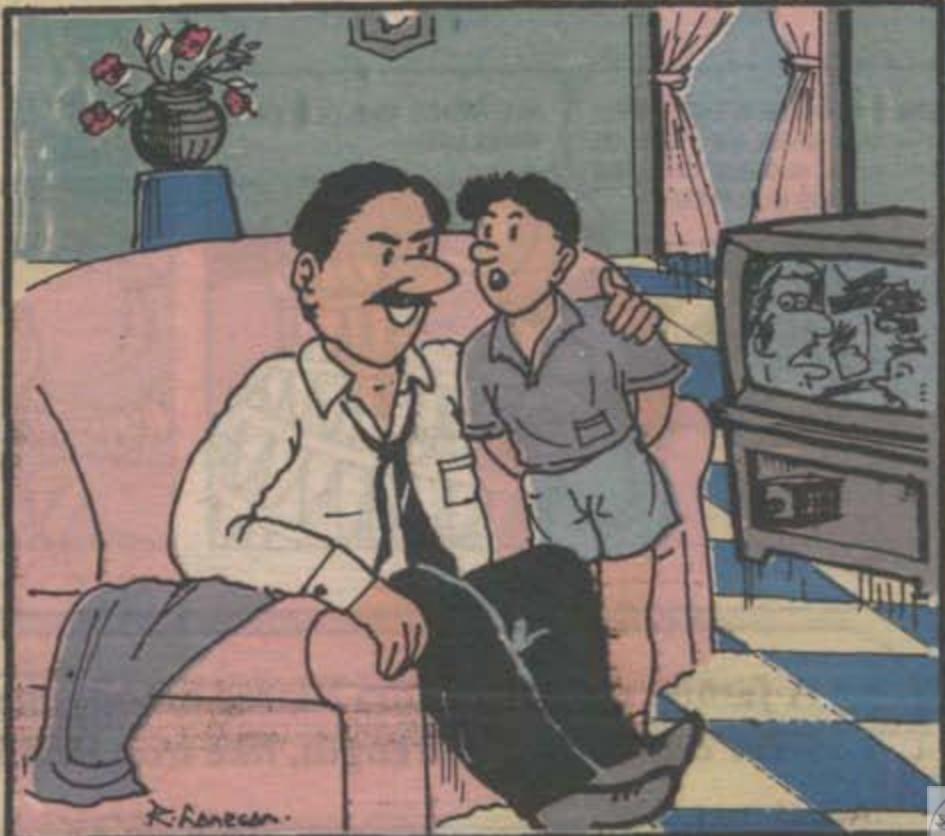
A family suffering from hatred among the members will soon wear out and lose strength, like iron that has been filed away.

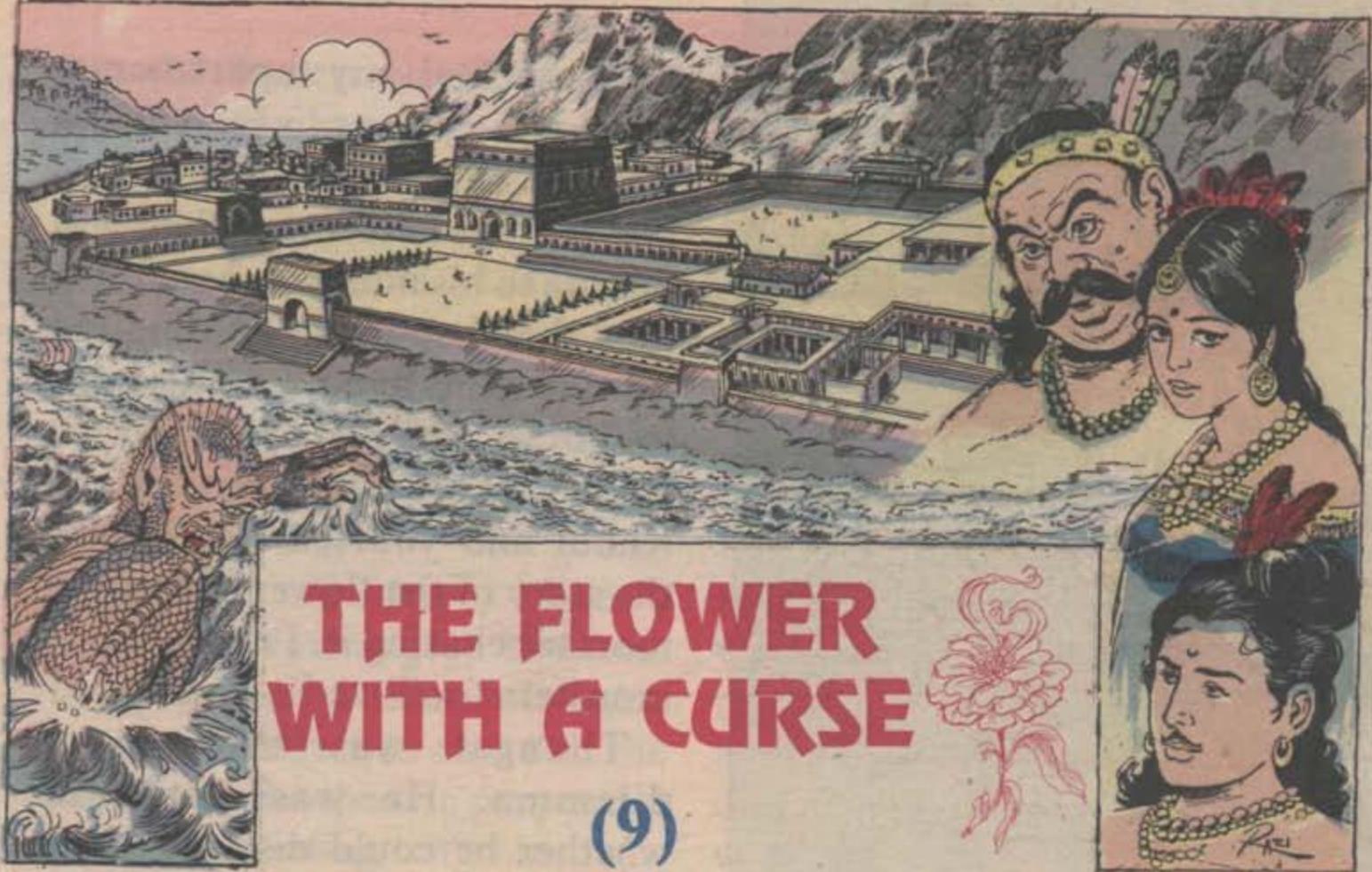


Of Green Rooms and Back-rooms

The inter-collegiate cultural festival organised by her college was coming to an end. The Principal was now on his feet thanking the colleges which had sent participants, the sponsors who had extended support in various ways, and the advertisers who had bought space in the 'FEST' souvenir. He mentioned about the keen rivalry among the students which, at one stage, had threatened to mar the proceedings; he did not forget to thank the *back-room boys* who ensured that no untoward incident took place during the week-long festival. As she trudged back home late in the night, Asima Sahoo of Dhenkanal wondered what the Principal meant by 'back-room boys'. Of course, she has heard of green rooms where the artistes generally have their make-up done and costumes put on. She had never heard of any back-rooms attached to the stage. In an organisation or activity, back-room boys are the people who do important work but are not seen or known about by the people, because their work is generally of a confidential nature. In this case, the Principal was actually referring to a select band of teachers whom he had taken into confidence and who worked among the participants to promote healthy rivalry devoid of jealousy, anger, and violence.

Young Anand Marathe, of Kandivli, had a portable black-and-white TV at home. His friend Bharat Sawant, staying next door, had no set, and often joined his school-mate to watch some good programmes. One evening the boy waited impatiently for his father to return from office. After he had settled down with a hot cup of tea, Anand approached him and whispered into his ears: "Dad, when will you get us a colour TV?" He patted his son. "Colour TV?" Anand then told him how his friend's uncle had come back from abroad, bringing a colour TV, adding Bharat would no longer come in to their flat to watch the TV. His father tried to put him off by saying he could now go and watch all programmes in colour on Bharat's TV. Anand tried his best to elicit a promise from his father. "Hey, you want to keep up with the Joneses?" he asked the boy smilingly, giving him another pat. Anand ran to his mother and asked her innocently, "Ma, where do the Joneses stay?" She knew what he was referring to and explained. 'To keep up with the Joneses' is a common expression about people snobbishly trying to imitate their neighbour's standard of living—something they may not normally afford.





(Thangal, from Maninagar, who along with his boat and bunches of "Shatabdika" flowers is tossed by the sea through an opening in the cliffs, finds himself in a strange land. A group of young girls, who are attracted by the flower, take him to the tribal chief of that place. Chieftain Kabui suggests that they should meet the king, Mahendra Singh of Nagapura, and apprise him of Thangal's mission—to entice the monster away from Maninagar with the help of the flowers. They present a bunch to the king who tells Princess Mallika that Thangal has brought the flowers for her. She wishes to have a meeting with him.)

Thangal was taken by surprise when the messenger from the palace sought him out as wished by Princess Mallika. After taking leave of Chieftain Kabui, he accompanied the soldier to the princess's apartments. He asked Thangal to wait there, saying he would go and inform the princess. Thangal wandered to the

large window on one side which opened out into the garden below.

"Oh! you've come!" Thangal had not noticed the princess's presence in the room. "You love flowers, don't you? But how did you know that I, too, love flowers? The flowers you've brought for me are really beauti-





ful. I've never seen such lovely flowers!" Princess Mallika said all this in one breath. She appeared quite excited about 'Shatabdika'. "I've kept them in my room. But what's this curse on the flower that I hear about?"

Thangal was really taken aback. "Buthow did you know about the curse, Princess?" He could not restrain himself from expressing his surprise.

Princess Mallika appeared as if she was expecting such a question. "I was standing behind the curtain for a long time. You see, the fragrance of the flowers

had reached my apartments, and I was curious to know from where it came. So, I went up to the room where my father was talking to his ministers and it was then that I saw him holding the flowers in his hand. I didn't want to go to him at once and so waited for a while, when I heard Kabui and yourself telling him the story of the flower and of the monster chasing it. I never knew, monsters too love flowers!"

Thangal was now in a dilemma. He was not sure whether he could disclose more details to the princess or he should remain discreet till he found out how much she really knew. He decided to play safe for the time being. "You asked me whether I love flowers? Yes, princess, but believe me I am *not* a monster!"

"Of course, you are not one!" The princess was quick in her response, adding with a mischievous smile, "But you do go after monsters, enticing them, don't you?"

Now, *that* meant, she had listened to all their conversation with the king, thought Thangal. So, she must also have guessed



that the flowers were not really intended for her or that he had taken them for her, as her father wanted her to believe! "So, you didn't believe that I brought the flowers for you, Princess?" he queried in an innocent tone.

"I wish it was true ... that you had brought them for me," said Mallika.

Thangal saw that a shadow was slowly forming on her face. "May I know, then, why you called me?" He was sure that the princess had a specific purpose in seeking a meeting with him.

"From the moment I heard that you had set out all by yourself to chase a monster," said the princess almost in a whisper, "I thought I could ask for your help in fighting an enemy."

"Did you say enemy, Princess?" Thangal appeared puzzled. "Chieftain Kabui was telling me that in living memory, this kingdom, Nagapura, had never known of an enemy. Then, how come..."

"I shall explain everything to you, Thangal—that's your name?" began the princess.

"Yes, Princess. I belong to the Tangkul tribe in Maninagar,"

Thangal introduced himself properly.

"As I was telling you, we have an enemy—an enemy within, I should say," said Mallika, giving enough time to Thangal to understand the implications. "He's none other than my own uncle. My father gave him a post in the army, but he was not satisfied. He wanted to be the Commander himself and asked my mother to persuade father to agree to his request. When father did not oblige him, uncle was very angry and even boasted to his friends in the army that he would one day become king. But, then, what'll happen to my father? No, he's not at all afraid of uncle, but he asked him never to enter the palace and told my mother that she and I should be very careful."

Thangal interrupted her. "Then, who's the Commander?"

"Oh! I should have told you. He's Arjun Singh," replied the princess. "My mother, too, feels that uncle is a bad man, as he might try to harm me. Father had one day told mother that as I don't have any brothers, he would want me to succeed him as





the ruler of Nagapura. I heard all this from my mother. Father has never spoken to me about these things, though I can sense that he is always alert and takes advice from his ministers. I have heard him say that if a king can make his subjects happy, then he is very safe and the people will take care of him. What do you say, Thangal?"

"Your father is very wise," remarked Thangal. "A king's strength lies in his people more than the army. He's very right. But where's your uncle these days?"

"I told you, he has a post in the army. He has been sent away from the capital. He's in charge of some soldiers who have been sent to guard the frontiers on the northern parts, across the mountains. And father gets reports from Commander Arjun Singh every day. However, mother fears that uncle might not remain quiet but hatch a conspiracy and create trouble for father. That's why I called you. Would you stay in the capital for our sake? Someone prepared to face a monster can come to *our* help, too..."

"Of course, princess. If you feel I can be of some service to all of you, I shall certainly remain here, but don't forget I've a mission to complete," said Thangal. "Your father has some plans and he'll discuss them with Kabui and me tomorrow."

"I quite understand, Thangal," said Mallika reassuringly. "Father need not know that we discussed the threat from uncle, though I shall be telling him that I called you to find more about 'Shatabdika'."

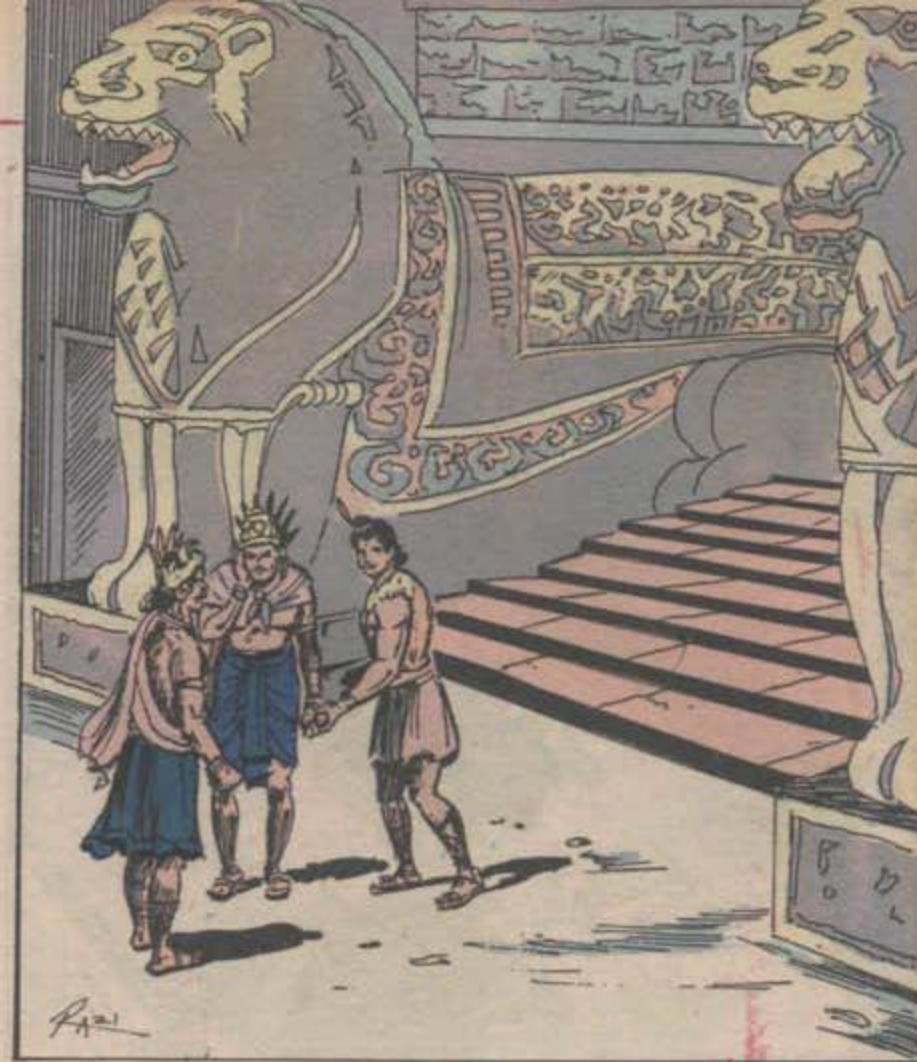
Princess Mallika asked an attendant to escort Thangal back to his room, where Chieftain



Kabui was anxiously awaiting his return. He was curious to know about the meeting with the princess, but Thangal had decided that he would not immediately divulge everything to Kabui. "She wanted to know about the flower," he told the Chieftain rather casually. "It looks as though she overheard part of our conversation with the king, and surprised me by asking about the curse on 'Shatabdika'. I told her the story and how the flower has blossomed after several years. I don't think she knows or has heard more than that."

"You were discreet not to divulge more to the princess," Kabui complimented him. "Let's wait to hear the king. I'm sure he has some plans for you."

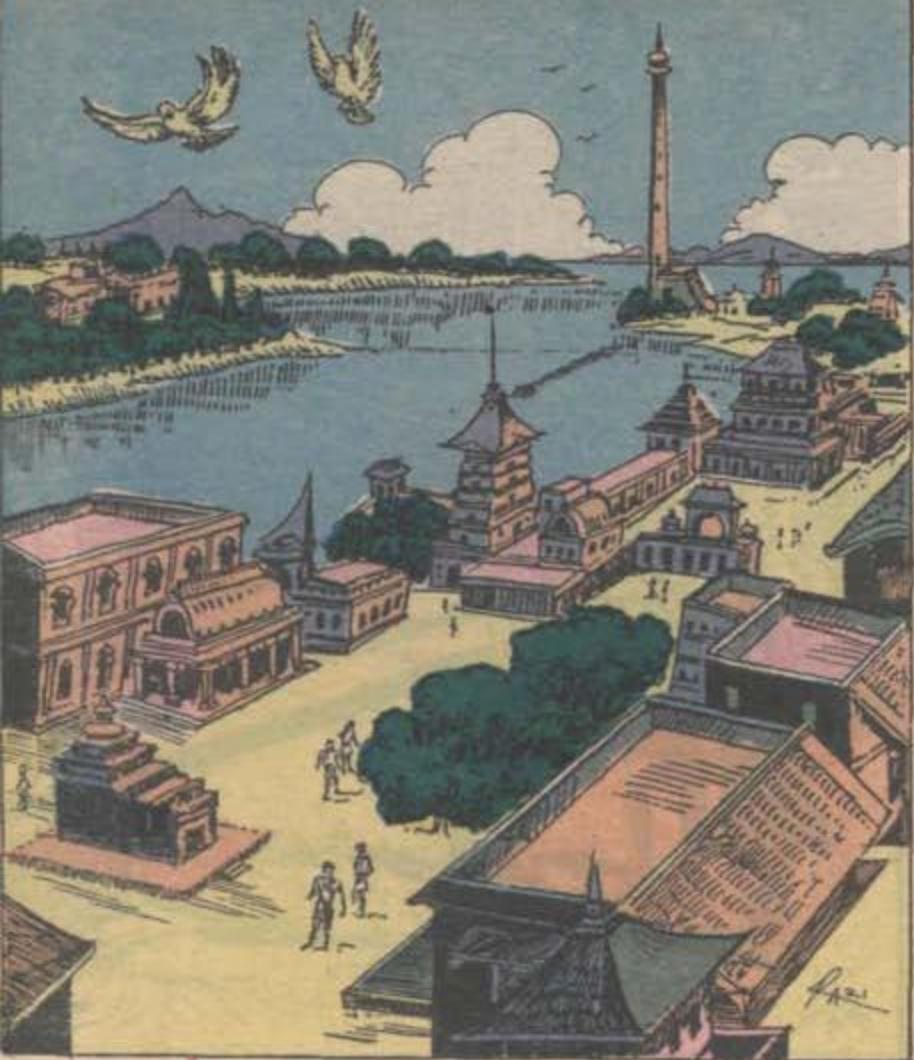
The next day, both of them were called by King Mahendra Singh. "As I told you, this young man should not risk his life by going out alone in search of the monster," he told Chieftain Kabui to the hearing of Thangal. "I have sent for my captain from the northern parts. He may take a few days to arrive. By then, boats will be ready to take them and a few soldiers to meet the monster.



Till then, let Thangal stay here. Before he sets out with the others, he'll come to you to collect the other bunches."

It was, thus, decided that Kabui will return to his place and wait for Thangal. Kabui only wondered how he would get round his daughter, Chitra, and her friends to part with the flowers.

For the next two days, Thangal did not hear from the princess. He was not sure whether it would be proper for him to seek a meeting with her. On the third day, when he returned from his



wanderings, he found a palace attendant waiting for him. "The princess has asked me to take you to her."

When he reached Mallika's apartments, Thangal found the princess waiting for him. She straight away came to the point. "My uncle is arriving in the capital tomorrow. No, he won't come into the palace. My father had sent for him, and his instructions will be conveyed to him by Commander Arjun Singh. The king wants him to accompany you to the sea as soon as the boats are ready. There will be some

soldiers, too, in two other boats. I wanted to tell you this so that you'll be on your alert. We may not meet again before you leave. Please take care of yourself. Perhaps you'll be able to find out if uncle has thought up some plans. But if he finds that you've the king's confidence, he may keep his thoughts close to his chest. I hope you'll achieve your mission, and come back here soon. Or will you proceed to Maninagar?"

"I've promised you that I'll remain here to be of service to you. Have you forgotten? By the way, what's your uncle's name?"

"I'm glad you remember your promise," said Princess Mallika. "Somehow I've a feeling that we'll need your help. Uncle's name is Veerandra Kumar. If he likes you, and if you tackle him cleverly, he may divulge his plans to you and seek your help as well, when he comes to know that you had set out—all by yourself—to chase a monster!" the princess added. She had a mischievous smile on her face.

Just then, an attendant came there. "The queen is asking for you, princess." Mallika was sad that their meeting had to end



abruptly. She took leave of Thangal, after asking the same attendant to escort him to his room.

On arrival in the capital, Captain Veerendra Kumar straight away went to meet the Commander. "How's the situation in the northern parts?" he asked the captain.

"Everything is peaceful, sir," replied Veerendra Kumar. "Captain Gajendra Singh told me that you've a new assignment for me. Where do I go? When?" He sounded rather impatient.

"A young man from Maninagar has reached our kingdom with some exotic flowers," the Commander explained, though he did not reveal all the details. "He was taking them somewhere else when the sea tossed him and his boat into our shores. He seems to have set out on his journey all by himself, and King Mahendra Singh is impressed by his courage. It is quite daring of him to have embarked on a journey wrought with danger!"

"Then, why did he start at all?" The captain evidently could not appreciate the brave act of another.

"When the king heard of the



purpose of his mission," said the Commander, without trying to answer the captain, "he felt that the youth should not go alone. The king wants you to escort him. You may take some soldiers with you as well."

Veerendra Kumar was now quite excited. "You said, this youth came in a boat. Does that mean he'll continue his journey by sea? So, if there is a fight, it will be at sea?"

"Captain, let me explain," said Arjun Singh, carefully choosing his words. "A monster, presumably from the sea, was causing



havoc in Maninagar. Now this boy—a tribal youth—is hopeful of enticing the monster away from Maninagar. It is believed that the monster was visiting Maninagar because of the flower which, we are told, has blossomed after nearly a hundred years."

"A mere tribal youth wishing to chase a monster? Do you believe such a cock-and-bull story, commander?" asked Veerendra Kumar.

"Veerendra Kumar!" The commander evidently had not taken the captain's sarcasm kindly. "We don't have any reason to disbelieve this brave boy who had sailed all this distance from Maninagar and all by himself to fulfil his mission. Besides they're the king's instructions and you had better carry

them out. I've to meet him and inform him of your assent."

"Yes, of course, I shall carry out the mission, Commander," said Veerendra Kumar. "You may inform the king. But when can I meet this youngster?"

"That boy will be with me when you come here tomorrow," said the Commander, before dismissing the captain.

Commander Arjun Singh was woken up by a soldier from the palace early next morning. "The king wants you urgently."

Arjun Singh hurried to the palace. He found Mahendra Singh in the durbar hall. Princess Mallika was with him. She was in tears. "What happened, your majesty?"

"The flowers have gone!" said the king almost in whispers.

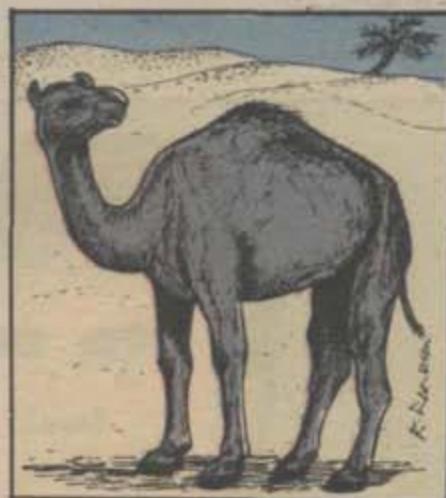
—To continue



THE WORLD OF NATURE

Surviving without water

The camel is called the ship of the desert. While a ship floats in water—seas, oceans, and rivers—the camel has to survive without water for days together. Its hump stores a lot of fat and it is this fat that gives the animal the required energy to survive. The camel does not perspire much and is thus able to conserve whatever water content is there in its body-system. Once it reaches a water-hole, it can drink anything like 25 gallons of water. The normal food of the camel consists of dry grass and cactii, some of which are succulents.



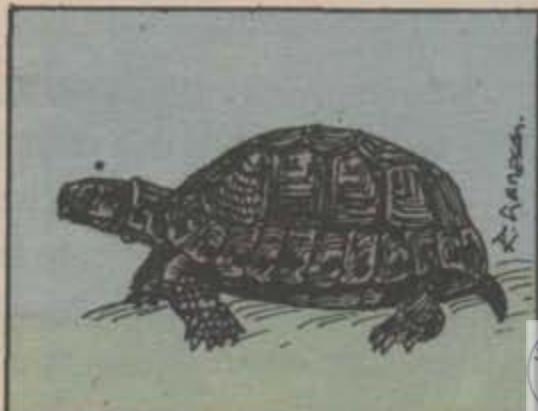
Bird's combing exercise

If you dip a bird's feather in water, the wet hair will lose its sheen. It does not when the feather remains on the bird. Almost all birds have a gland at the tip of its tail. The gland produces oil. When the bird pecks at the gland, it releases the oil which then spreads to the feathers. It is a common sight to see the bird combing its feathers, when the oil spreads evenly. The oil not only gives a sheen to the feathers but protects them from getting wet, say, when the bird has to fly while it rains. The little oil that gets into the bird's mouth provides Vitamin D for the bird which gets extra energy.



Longest life

Mauritius is the name of a country; it is also the name given to a tortoise that lived for nearly 152 years—the longest ever recorded for any animal, bird, reptile, or rodent. Some people who had seen and were familiar with the amphibian believe that it had lived for 200 years. Carolina is a living tortoise in the U.S.A. Its present age is 123 years. Among mammals, elephants live the longest—60/70 years. The hippopotamus and rhinoceros live for 40 years and the bear for 30/32 years. The longest recorded for a dog was 22 years. Some horses are believed to have lived for over 50 years. Eagles and parrots have a long life—50 years. Among fishes, the catfish and American eel live for 60 and 50 years respectively.



SPORTS SNIPPETS



No longer a 'loudmouth'

Football fans the world over are keenly watching the rise of Lothar Matthaeus of Germany, which will not easily forget the legendary Franz Beckenbauer. Lothar came into lime-light some thirteen years ago when, as a lad of 19 years, he won his first 'cap' to represent his country at the 1980 European championship in Italy. He had since been an important part of the German teams. On October 13, he got his 103rd cap to equal the record of Beckenbauer. Germany played against Uruguay, under Lothar's captaincy. He had led Germany to win the 1990 World Cup, and can be expected to lead his.

country again in the 1994 World Cup. When he does that, he will be the third German—after Uwe Seeler and Karl-Heinz Schnellinger—to play a fourth World Cup, and will qualify to earn the title "Kaiser", like Beckenbauer. Lothar began his career as an interior decorator and painter ten years ago, when he was given to using a lot of words, a habit which earned him the label "Lothar the Loudmouth". The wild youth of the '80s has by now come a long way and metamorphosed into one of world's most composed and intelligent footballers.

"Instant" cricket

We are now familiar with Test matches lasting four and five days, also "one-dayers". Cricket confined to two days is now gaining popularity. Two-day matches are played by teams with six players. The Second Hong Kong Sixes were played in October with teams from the cricket elite nations : **Red Group**: Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong; **Green Group** : England, Australia, India; **Blue group** : W. Indies, New Zealand, South Africa. The missing team was that of Zimbabwe. Brian Catton, of the Cricket World International, remarked : "In its second year, the Sixes is definitely the biggest cricket





tournament in the world, after the World Cup." Pakistan captain Wasim Akram, recalling his team's defeat last year at the hands of Hong Kong, said : "This time, we're taking it very seriously." The great W.Indian player, Vivian Richards, calls it "instant" cricket, predicting a rosy future for "this very enjoyable game".

A long wait

The first ever Beijing marathon took place in 1981. It has taken 12 long years for a Chinese national to win the event. On October 17, Hu Gangjun brought glory to his country when he won the men's event in 2 hours 10 minutes 57 seconds. In 1992, he had come second with a time of 2.12:42. This year with 2 km yet to go, he overtook Daisuke Tokunaga of Japan, who finished 12 seconds behind Gangjun. The women's event was also won by a Chinese—Li Yemei, who clocked 2.30:36.

World record for Japan

In the women's 20,000 metres event at the athletic meet in Amagasaki, in Japan, on September 19, Izumi Maki of Japan established a new world record, with a time of 1 hour 6 minutes 48.8 seconds. The record till then (1 hr 6:55:5 min.) stood in the name of Rosa Mota of Portugal.





Tales from Many Lands (China)
The farmer meets his match

Once in a Chinese village, there lived a wealthy farmer. He kept a retinue of employees to work on his farm. Strangely, they left one after the other, after working for a day or two. He would always find fault with them for not doing the work as per his instructions. They would then either leave or be dismissed. The few who remained went about their work grudgingly.

A time came when the farmer was unable to get fresh hands. He realised that no one from his village was eager to take up employment with him, and he would have to bring workers from neighbouring places. He spread word that he was looking for farm-hands.

One day, a youngster landed up at his door-step. He looked a

young man of poor circumstances. The wealthy farmer thought he could extract maximum work from him and probably would also be able to cheat him in regard to his wages. "You must do all that I ask you to do," he told the youth sternly. "Otherwise, I won't pay you any wages. You might even be dismissed. If you're agreeable to these conditions, you may stay back."

"O Master! I shall do whatever you ask me to," the young man said most humbly. "And I shall try to do it to the best of my ability." He joined duty immediately. Even on the first day, he completed all the work given to him and did not utter a word of protest or grumble. The farmer was really surprised. He was expecting protests whenever he gave him hard work and little



time to complete it. Yet, the youth kept mum. How then could he turn him out? If he were to be retained for more days, then he would have to be given his wages. The farmer began thinking of a way out to get rid of him.

The next morning he called the young man. "Not far away, there's a hill where there's plenty of grass. You take the cow over there for grazing. You may allow it to roam about; you don't have to pluck grass for the cow."

The man led the cow to the hill. Instead of allowing it to graze, he tied the animal to a tree and began beating it, "Come on! Get on to th' tree!" he shouted. How could a cow climb a tree? The animal bleated and the man beat it nor-sto-. Passersby stopped on hearing the pitiable cries of the cow. They ridiculed him, and some of them even went and reported the matter to the farmer.

He came running where the cow had been tied. "What nonsense is this?" he shouted at his worker angrily. "Do you want to kill my cow?"

"No, master," said the young man rather unconcerned. "This

cow is disobedient. I asked it to climb up to reach the grass. But it's refusing to do so. Let me see whether I can make it obey orders!" He then began beating the animal again.

The farmer was furious. "Stop it!" he shouted. "It's all my fault; I shouldn't have mentioned the hill. Take back the cow!"

"But *you* only asked me to bring the cow here!" protested the youth. "You said I need not pluck grass, but allow the animal to graze on its own. But it refused to do so; that's why I beat it! Now *you* want me to take it back home! Will you change your orders once I take it home?"

The farmer was at his wit's end. Would there be no way to get rid of this idiot? he wondered. The next day, he called him and said, "The tiles on the roof are broad enough to grow vegetables. Get on to the roof and sow some seeds." He knew he was giving the man rather a tall order and he would not be able to undertake the job. And if he failed to do the job, he would have sufficient reasons to pack him off.

The young man got on to the roof and began breaking the tiles.



Some pieces fell on the farmer who was taking rest below. "Hey! Why are you *breaking* the tiles?" he shouted at the man.

"They are very hard. The seeds must have a soft base. That's why I'm breaking the tiles!" the worker shouted back.

The farmer realised his folly. "All right, you come down!"

The youth hesitated. "I climbed to the roof only because *you* asked me to. Strange that *you* now ask me to come down!"

The farmer began thinking of other strategies to send him away. The next day, he gave him a still more difficult job. "The seeds sown on the farm are all drying up in the hot sun. Go and pick them up and bring them back here."

The young man concluded that his master must have gone nuts. Sowing seeds is easy, but picking up each and every tiny seed will not be that easy! Suddenly, the

man was struck with an idea. He began breaking the walls around the main door. The sound brought the farmer rushing to the door which was about to come down. "Hey, what're you doing? Have you gone nuts?"

The man answered coolly, "I'm trying to widen the door. Only then can I bring in the field. All the seeds will drop on the floor once the field is turned upside down!"

"You can stop with that, young man!" said the farmer. "I don't wish to know how you propose to *bring* the field here. In a roll?"

The farmer then went inside and brought a bag of coins. "Take, here's your wages. And don't ever come back to me for work!" He heaved a sigh of relief when he saw the back of the youth vanish among the trees. But he felt ashamed that all his wily tricks had failed him once.



ANIMALS AND BIRDS OF INDIA

The Performing Artistes Among Bears

The distinctive feature of the Sloth Bear is the white "V" mark on its chest. This bear is very common in India and can be found in rocky hill forests and jungles. It can be caught, tamed, and trained easily. The dancing bear, often brought to our doorsteps, are mostly of this variety. The acrobatics by performing bears are a popular item in Indian circus. They are even made to jump through a burning ring without singeing its thick growth of hair.

The sloth bear averages 150 cm in length. It can stand up like a human being, when it assumes a height of 65 to 85 cm. Its footprints are very much like those of human beings. Rather uncouth in shape, the sloth bear is a brownish black. It has a pale whitish-grey snout and long white claws.

During the day, they prefer to hide behind boulders and in caves and sleep it off. Honey is their favourite and they will even climb trees to reach the toddy-pots left there to collect the intoxicating drink. Forest-dwellers revel in recounting the antics of drunken bears.

Both their eyesight and hearing are poor, but they have an acute sense of smell and detect the presence of human beings from a distance.

The Himalayan Brown Bear and the Himalayan Black Bear can be called the Sloth Bear's cousins.





ARTISTS OF MODERN INDIA

NANDALAL BOSE

The one name that comes to us as soon as we think of the art of modern India is Nandalal Bose. He was a genius of striking originality and, as a great teacher, he helped a number of other geniuses to flourish.

Nandalal, born in the eighties of the last century, came to the notice of Abanindranath Tagore, who ran a school for promising young artists, in Calcutta. In Nandalal he found his most ideal disciple.

That was the time when poet Rabindranath Tagore was giving shape to his dream of a seat of learning amidst Nature. That was Shantiniketan. In 1914 Nandalal joined it. Soon he took charge of the Kala Bhavan, the art faculty of the institution, and dedicated himself to its development putting his heart and soul into it.



While his students were inspired by his art, critics and art-lovers found in his work a new expression of the Indian genius. Nandalal stressed three principles which an artist should follow: he must be a keen observer of Nature; he must understand his tradition and he must have a distinct vision of his own—a stamp of originality.

In the art of Nandalal we can find a fulfilment of all these principles. If we look at his sketches of the different aspects or objects of Nature—the trees, the flowers, the beasts, and the birds—we can feel how he had discovered the most fascinating elements in all that.



Secondly, he studied the tradition of India with keen and creative eyes and reproduced them magnificently—for example the art of Ajanta.

And he recreated both Nature and our tradition with a masterly touch of originality. For him his art was not a means of livelihood or profession, but a yogic *Sadhana*. He totally identified himself with the object or idea he was painting.

He received numerous honours and awards before his death in 1966, but nothing seemed to have touched him. He remained humble and dedicated to his art till the end. He has proved to be a great influence on the artists of our time.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Ootacamund is known as the Queen of Hill Stations. What is its present name?
- Name the first play in English to be written for children. Who wrote it?
- Karnataka is famous for a unique type of metal ware. What is it called?
- Sir Roger Bannister is a well-known name among athletes. For what is he remembered?
- Where will you go to see the Char Minar?
- You often go to buy a quire of foolscap paper. How many sheets will there be in a quire? How many quires make one ream?
- Two Indian leaders participated in all the three Round Table Conferences held in London to consider the question of self-rule for India. Who were they?
- Who found that diseases are caused by bacteria?
- What is the name of India's first surface-to-surface missile?
- The financial year begins on April 1 in India. When does it start in Britain?
- The popular TV serial *Malgudi Days* is based on a well-known novel. Name the book and its author.
- In which country would you find the bird Kiwi?
- For whom was the Peacock Throne made?
- What are the four fundamental freedoms?
- Who was the President of the first session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in 1885?

Answers:

- Udagamandalam
- Peculiar Pan, written by Sir James Barrie in 1904.
- Bidriware, because it comes from Bidar, in north Karnataka. Its uniqueness is attributed to the silver inlay on black metallic base.
- He was the first man to run a mile in less than 4 minutes—on May 6, 1954.
- Hyderabad—capital of Andhra Pradesh
- 24 sheets—20 quires. These days, a ream is made up of a certain weight of paper and therefore, the number of sheets in a ream may vary.
- Freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear.
- W.C. Bonnerjee
- The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan
- New Zealand
- Swami and His Friends by R.K. Narayan
- April 6
- Pritivi
- Bidhiware, because it comes from Bidar, in north Karnataka. Its uniqueness is attributed to the silver inlay on black metallic base.
- He was the first man to run a mile in less than 4 minutes—on May 6, 1954.
- Hyderabad—capital of Andhra Pradesh
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- Freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear.
- W.C. Bonnerjee



ALL BECAUSE OF A KICK !

Monsoon was still days away. Yet it started raining in Mangalpur village. The downpour was rather heavy, and old Naina Devi's small house started leaking. "Drip-drip" it went. She drew a stool, stood on it, and tried to plug the hole on the ceiling with a piece of cloth. It worked for some time, but when the cloth was too damp, the water dripped through. The drops falling on the floor made a puddle

which later flowed into different directions.

An ill-tempered woman that she was, Naina Devi was angry with the rain, angry with the ceiling of her old house. She placed the largest vessel she had right below where it was dripping. The vessel would take the drops and she could empty it after it got filled up. She cursed the rain. "This DRIP-DRIP!" she said aloud. As she shifted the





Sleep? Not a chance! the tiger thought, when he heard all that noise from inside the house. He wondered, who could be this monster called DRIP-DRIP? Whoever the villain was, he sure was creating a hell of a noise inside and probably havoc, too. Not that he was afraid of anybody, but he did not want any fight right at that moment. The downpour continued, and he was feeling sleepy, too. The animal moved closer to the wall and closed his eyes.

Came Bheem Babu, the washerman in the village, that way in pouring rain. He was in a foul mood. He was on his way back home with the clothes washed and dried, when the sky came down in a torrent. Before he realised what was happening, his donkey ran away with the bundle of clothes on its back. He searched for the donkey everywhere without much success. Naturally, he too was angry with the rain that was the cause of his predicament. He was willing to lose the animal but not the clothes. After all, he had to give them back to his customers. What would he say to pacify

metal boxes and trunks from one corner to another, they hit the wall. "Bang! Bang!" She dragged her cot also. "Crack! Creeck!" the wooden legs cried. "This DRIP-DRIP is just killing me!" she repeated, rather loudly.

Unaware by old Naina Devi, a tiger had taken refuge outside her house. She had kept there a few knick-knacks not wanted in the house and had given them a thatched roof. The animal found the corner quite cosy and decided to quietly sleep it out till the rain subsided and he could then escape into the nearby forest.



them? He was not in the habit of taking the donkey out on a leash. That was how it managed to sprint away from the downpour. Now, where would he search for the donkey? He was wet to the bones and every now and then he wiped his forehead and eyes so that he could see ahead.

That was when he saw the legs of an animal jutting out from the dark corner of a house beneath a thatched roof. "Ah! You thought you could escape from me?" Bheem Babu gave the animal a hefty kick. Luckily for him, the tiger did not growl or snarl. He huddled closer to the wall. "Ha ha! You lazy bones! Get up!" He gave it another kick.

The tiger thought, it must be a more dreadful creature than that DRIP-DRIP. The two kicks were really painful. He did not want to suffer more. So, he meekly got up and followed the 'creature' walking in front of him. Bheem Babu stopped in front of his house, found the rope with which he used to tether his donkey to the tree, put the loop around the neck of the animal—as neither of his hands was free, he had not cared to wipe his eyes



and he was blinded for the time being—tightened the loop, and hurried to the door muttering, "You can afford to get wet for some time!"

"Open the door!" he shouted impatiently. His wife opened the door and looked out. "Where are the clothes?" she asked him.

"The bundle must have fallen off the donkey's back!" he said, wiping his eyes, cheeks, and forehead. "I shall go and search for it after the rain stops."

"And where's the donkey?" she queried. "You could have brought it to the back door, and





we could have accommodated him in the kitchen, till the rain stops."

"No! He had run away with the clothes!" Bheem Babu was still angry with his donkey. "Let him get wet for some time. That'll teach him a lesson!"

"Poor chap!" the woman pitied the donkey. But before she closed the door, she took a good look at the donkey tethered outside. "Hey! What kind of a donkey is that?" she shouted behind her.

That brought Bheem Babu back to the door now kept ajar.

He, too, took a good look at the animal. "A tiger!" the word slipped out of his tongue, in a whisper. "Shut the door! Quick!"

Once inside, he found himself shivering—not because of the rain or his wet clothes, but from the revelation that a tiger had followed him in the rain and he had tied it in front of his house—secure. Suddenly he wondered, was it the same animal he had kicked earlier, not once but twice? If he had escaped its wrath then, it sure would not spare him now if he got out of the house or if it were to break loose from the tree. He did not want to think of the consequences. He and his wife spent a sleepless night. It had stopped raining some time in the night, but neither of them dared open the door to find out whether the animal was still there. It was just before dawn that they fell asleep and so, by the time they got up, the sun was already up in the horizon. "Bheem Babu!" someone called out. There was a knock on the door as well.

He recognised the voice, as that of one of his customers. He slowly opened the door. "I've



come to collect my clothes," said the visitor.

Before he answered him, Bheem Babu looked all around and at the tree as well. The rope, with one end broken, lay on the ground. "You didn't see a tiger... over there?" he asked of Malla Singh.

"A tiger? Did you say, a tiger? In your compound?" asked Malla Singh, unbelievingly. "Are you still dreaming, Bheem Babu? See, there is bright sunshine, and no tiger is tied to any tree! But where's your donkey?"

"Come, in, Malla Singh, let me explain everything." Bheem Babu let him in. When they were seated, he recounted all that had happened. What he was unable to tell him was how the tiger made good his escape in the dead of night. Because of the incessant rain for some hours the rope, usually meant for the donkey, had become wet and the fibrous stuff gave way when the tiger gave it one or two strong jerks and pulls, and the animal quietly made its way back to the forest. Bheem Babu casually boasted, "I wanted to open the door and give the tiger a couple of kicks to send



him back reeling to the jungle; but I slept for a while longer, and before I went and opened the door, you were already there! Presumably, the tiger wasn't there when you came. It seems to have vanished into thin air! Lucky! there's no hiding place anywhere around my house. I must go and ask Naina Devi how she allowed the tiger into her house."

"But what I can't believe, Bheem Babu, is that you really gave it a kick or two at Naina Devi's place!" said Malla Singh. "Would you have done so if you had recognised the animal then?"



Thank your lucky stars it was raining and you couldn't see properly. Anyway, let's forget about the tiger. I came here to collect my clothes. What shall we do now!"

Bheem Babu was profuse in his apologies. Before he could decide on a strategy, his wife was seen rushing out. "Our dear donkey has come back!" The two men followed her and found, much to their comfort, the bundle of clothes intact on its back. Only those dresses on top were a bit damp. Evidently, the donkey had found a safe refuge long before

the clothes could get wet.

Malla Singh went back and told his friends about Bheem Babu and the tiger. When they, in turn, narrated the story to others, the number of kicks which Bheem Babu gave the tiger had doubled and trebled. Word spread and it also reached the ears of the king of the land.

He sat up. So, there was someone in his kingdom who dared give kicks to a tiger? His talents should be suitably employed, decided the king, who had just then received the news that his enemy was heading towards his palace gates with a strong army. He sent for Bheem Babu, "I've never heard of such bravery, Bheem Babu!" said the king, and straight away came to the point. "I'm appointing you my commander!" He then told him about the enemy and asked him to go and declare war on behalf of the king. That meant fighting, of course.

Bheem Babu blinked for a while and then stammered, "I'll do my best, your majesty!" He took leave of the king.

When his wife was told about his new mission, she was



extremely happy, but was surprised to see her husband put on a long face. "What's the matter?"

"I've never ridden even a donkey! How am I then to ride a horse?" he replied without as much as even a glance at her.

"That should be no problem," said the woman reassuringly. "I shall tie you to the horse. The rest of it you'll have to manage."

Bheem Babu was not sure whether it would be so simple as that. That night he had a dream. He dreamt that he was riding a horse in front of a huge army. They met the enemy a little away from the palace and the enemy soldier in front charged at him, when his own horse went into a sudden gallop, throwing him to the ground. He gave a yell—and woke up. He was perspiring all over. Luckily, his wife was fast asleep. He realised he was only dreaming.

The next morning, one of the best horses from the royal stable was brought for him. The soldier helped Bheem Babu to mount, and his wife brought a long rope and tied him to the horse. The animal did not like the way the rope had been tied tight all



around his body. The discomfort irritated the horse and it galloped off, with Bheem Babu holding on to its neck in utter desperation.

The horse headed towards the open ground in front of the palace, where Bheem Babu found that the enemy camp was not far away. As the horse ran, it went beneath a tree with low hanging branches. In a desperate bid to free himself of the horse, Bheem Babu caught hold of a branch. But as he had been tied to the horse tight, he could not free himself. Instead, the branch came off in his hands.



It really made a frightening sight—the speeding horse, its rider tied to the animal all over, and his one hand holding a branch with a lot of leaves at a fearsome angle. Little wonder, then, the enemy soldier who saw him first took fright and ran, calling out, "Run! Run for your lives!" The other soldiers did not waste even a single moment to take a look at the horse or the rider. They ran out following their mate. So much so, by the time Bheem Babu was inside the enemy camp, it was all deserted. By then, the rope had also become loose and he could wriggle himself out and jump to the ground.

He turned round and walked

back, leading the horse by one hand. That was how the king's soldiers saw him as they approached the enemy camp. "There's no one there; you all can go back!" he announced. His voice was not trembling.

Some of the soldiers hurried to the palace to give the happy news to the king. He came out to greet Bheem Babu. "So, you scared away an entire army single-handed? I'm making you my commander-in-chief, Bheem Babu!"

He now mustered enough courage to get on to the horse himself. As he rode back home, he wondered where he could go and search for the tiger to offer him a kind word, instead of a kick.

Kindness affects more than severity.





VEER HANUMAN

(39)

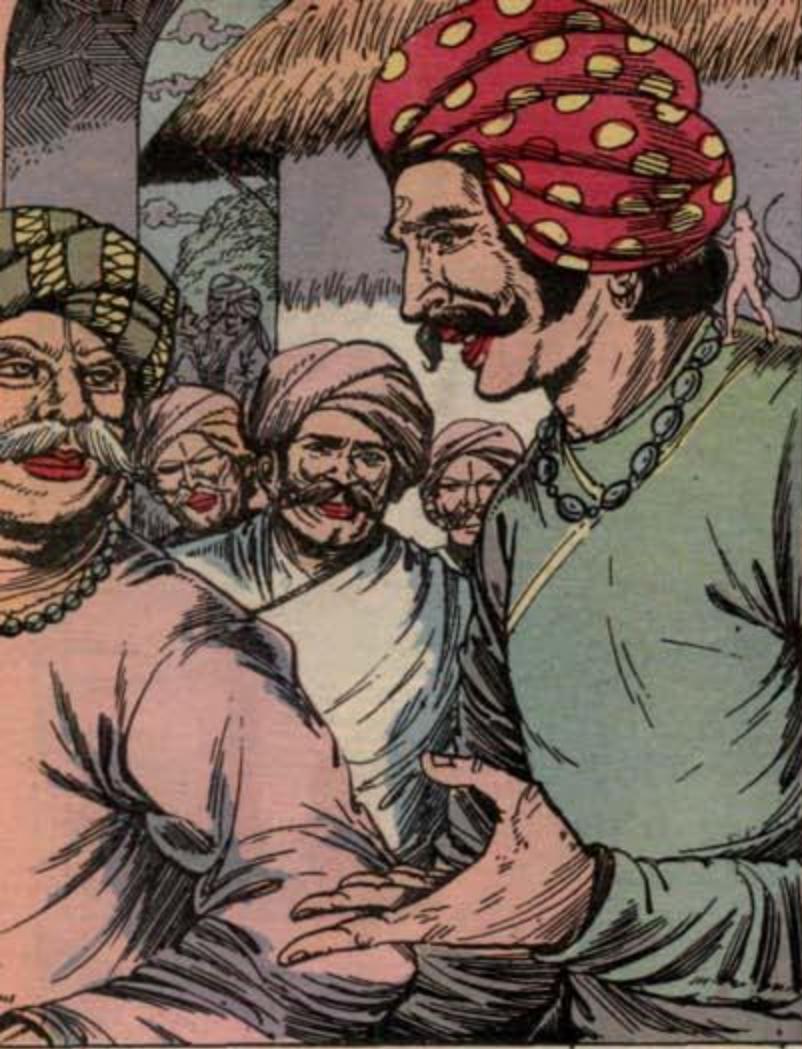
(On his way to Ayodhya, Rama stops at the ashram of sage Bharadwaj, who tells him how anxiously Bharata is awaiting him. Rama sends Hanuman to Nandigram at the outskirts of Ayodhya where Bharata is camping. He is overjoyed to know that his brother will soon reach Ayodhya. He asks Satrughna to arrange for a warm welcome to Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana. The moment Bharata sees Rama alight from the Pushpak, he rushes to him, carrying Rama's wooden sandals on his head. Rama accepts them from his brother. He then pays his obeisance to his mother Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra. He gets into a chariot with Hanuman, and is driven to Ayodhya where arrangements for his coronation are apace under the supervision of the royal guru, Vasishta.)

Soon after his coronation, Sree Rama took over all the responsibilities of Ayodhya's administration. One day, he sent for Sumantra. "We've to do quite a lot for the people's welfare. Is there enough money in the treasury?" he asked his minister.

"For the last fourteen years, people have not paid any taxes," said Sumantra. "There's all round prosperity in the kingdom, but the farmers are not parting with the state's share of the produce. Trade is going on smoothly, but the traders have

RAMRAJYA : THE BEGINNINGS





not paid their taxes. There are several wealthy individuals in our kingdom, but the revenue from them is practically zero. It is the poorer sections of people who are suffering because of all this. We must do something to improve their lot."

"How was Bharata ruling all this time?" Rama was really surprised. "How was he managing the affairs of the state?"

"Bharata? He was all the while thinking of you, worrying about you," said Sumantra. "He never lifted his eyes off your wooden sandals that he was worshipping.

When some of the officials went to him to tell him of the state of affairs, he merely told them that they should not harass people and collect taxes. I couldn't do anything about it."

Rama was contemplating steps to be taken to increase the revenue, when Lakshmana walked in. Rama told him about the empty treasury. Lakshmana thought for a while and said, "I've a strategy to suggest. Whoever has not paid any tax should be punished. Let each one of them bring gold equivalent to the size of a pumpkin. If they do so, they will escape punishment. Those who fail will certainly be punished. This should prompt them to pay their taxes. After all, they had evaded paying taxes all these years, and we're asking them to give us gold the size of just a pumpkin! I think we must give this a try."

Rama approved of the strategy. Soon, announcements were made all over the kingdom. Lakshmana was confident that the people would come forward to pay taxes; however, he was also eager to know their reaction to his proposal. He called Hanu-



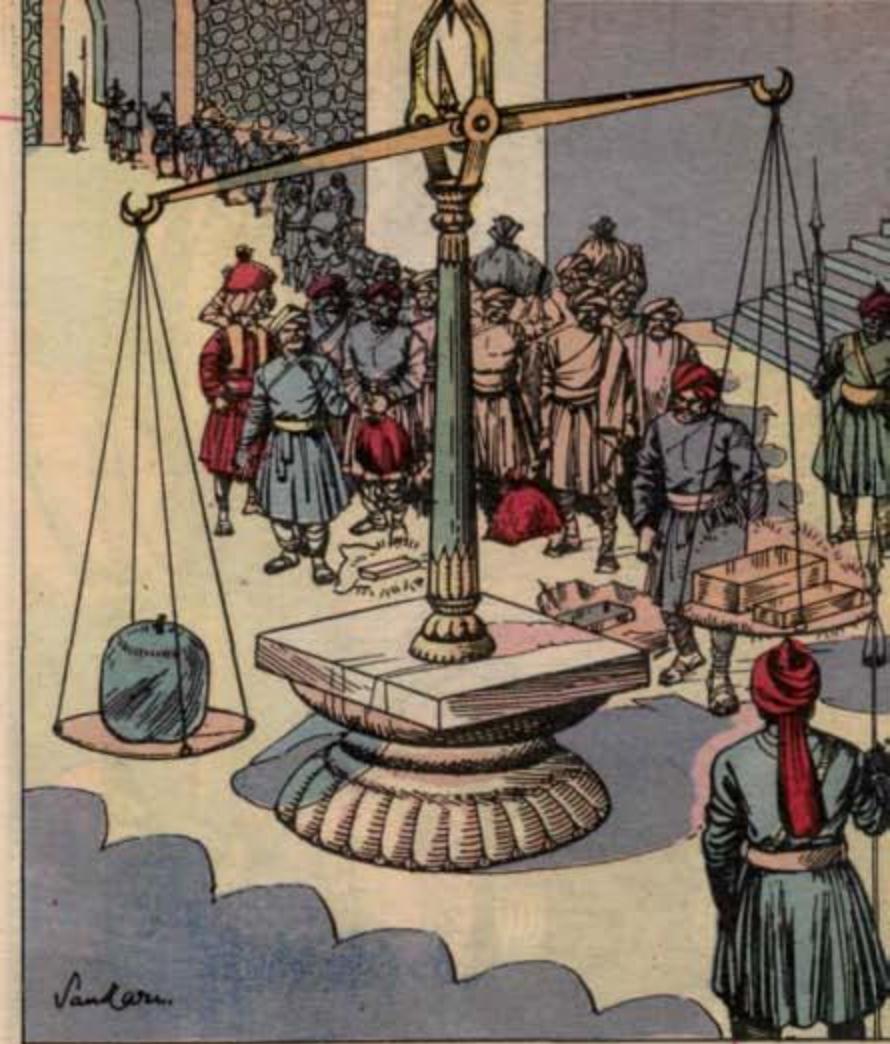
man and said, "Please go round the country and ascertain the people's views about our tax collection method."

Accordingly, Hanuman assumed a small form and hopped around the country. On his return, he told Lakshmana that the people generally accepted the proposal. "I didn't hear any kind of protests from anybody. In fact, they're surprised why we're collecting only a small sum. Against the taxes that were due from them all these years, we've asked them only to give us gold of the size of a pumpkin! It would be a huge loss to the government, I heard some people say."

"There'll be some people who are honest and pay us whatever is due from them," remarked Lakshmana. "We must prevent them from being cheated."

Both Lakshmana and Hanuman thought of ways and means to ensure proper and accurate collection of taxes. "Let's go to the temple of goddess Dharmadevata. We shall worship her and ask her to show us the way," said Lakshmana.

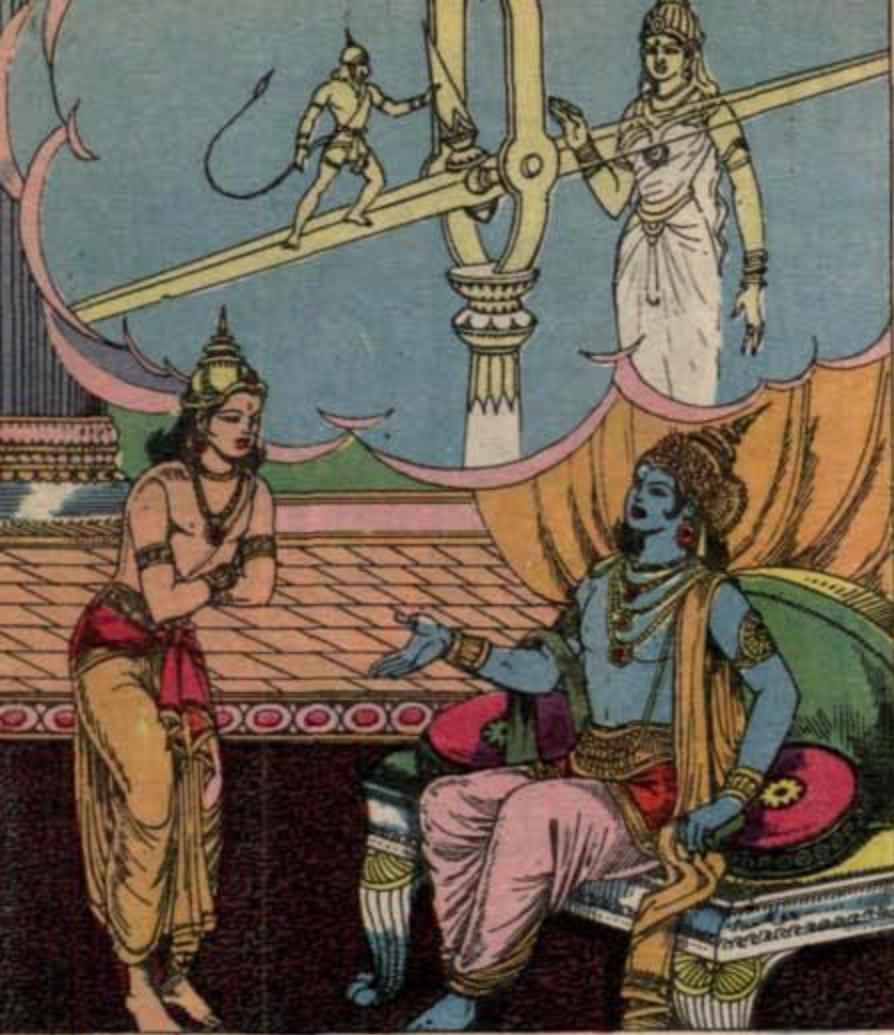
Once again Hanuman took a



small form and accompanied Lakshmana to the temple of Dharmadevata. There, after worship, both of them sat in meditation for a long while. They felt at peace with themselves. By then it was dark. As they walked back to the palace, they discussed what they would do the next day.

Early morning, Lakshmana fixed a huge balance in the palace courtyard, and placed a pumpkin on one side. People lined up to pay their taxes in the form of gold bars and blocks. One of them brought a sackful of gold. He placed the bars one after another,





watching whether the other side was rising to level up. No, it would not. He was amazed. He ran home to fetch more bars and blocks. After a while, the two sides levelled up. The people realised that the pumpkin was no ordinary pumpkin; it could decide how much gold each person should give towards his dues. The pumpkin had some extraordinary power to decide how much each family could afford and should pay. Anyway, the royal treasury was soon filled up.

Rama was happy and equally

surprised. He called Lakshmana and Sumantra into his room. Hanuman went with them. "How's it that the pumpkin was weighing differently for different persons?" Rama enquired. "I'm afraid the balance has not been just and fair. Were the people being cheated?"

"No, brother, there was no cheating involved," replied Lakshmana, politely. "We must be grateful to Hanuman. He went to all nooks and corners of the kingdom and found out how much each family could afford by way of taxes. And then we prayed to goddess Dharmadevata for guidance how to go about collecting the taxes. Hanuman took a tiny form and sat in a corner on one side of the balance, increasing or decreasing his own weight. Everytime, he was receiving directions from the *devata* and only he could hear her words. Very few people had brought the actual dues. The others had to return home to fetch more gold. Not one among the people had any grouse against the balance. They were certain that they received justice from the balance."

Rama was about to turn to Hanuman. Dharmadevata appeared before him and said, "O! Sree Rama! What your brother told you is the whole truth. They acted according to my directions. Besides, I sat along with Hanuman on the balance to ensure that people got justice. Don't have any misapprehension about justice being denied to anybody. You haven't done anything unjust." The goddess then disappeared. Only Rama had seen her.

Rama desired that he treated his subjects to a fete. He had merely mentioned this to Hanuman, and he soon made all arrangements. Till they were complete, he did not have a morsel of food nor a wink of sleep. Sita took pity on him. She was obliged to him for having worked for her reunion with her lord, Rama. And he had endeared himself to her in many ways. So, she had a soft corner for him.

"You've been working all through the day," she went up to Hanuman and reminded him. "You haven't taken any food. At least now, you must come and eat



food."

Hanuman took it as her orders. How could he disobey her? He went along with her to the kitchen where different kinds of food were being prepared. Sita herself spread a leaf for him and served food. All that she placed on the leaf vanished in no time. She served more items, which too he ate fast. She served again, again, and again. There was no protest from Hanuman! Instead, he ate all that she placed on the leaf. The next time she went inside to fetch more food, she found to her consternation that





not much was left, and if she continued to give him food, then the very feast would have to be called off! Sita found herself at her wit's end. She ran to Rama for advice.

He merely smiled and said, "Who do you think is Hanuman? He's the incarnation of Lord Siva himself. It's your duty to satisfy him. I don't think I can help you in this matter."

Sita went back to the kitchen and prayed to the Lord. "O Maheswara! Please be kind to us! You must satisfy your insatiable hunger yourself. Otherwise, we'll

all be put to shame!" She then chanted the name of Siva. The next moment Hanuman got up, washed his hand, and went away.

Sitadevi heaved a sigh of relief. She then prayed to goddess Annapurneswari—the giver of food. In no time Sita found that all the vessels were once again brimful of food. Soon, the dining hall was full of people, including the Vanara soldiers who had accompanied Rama, Lakshmana, and Hanuman to Ayodhya. They enjoyed the food and were very playful.

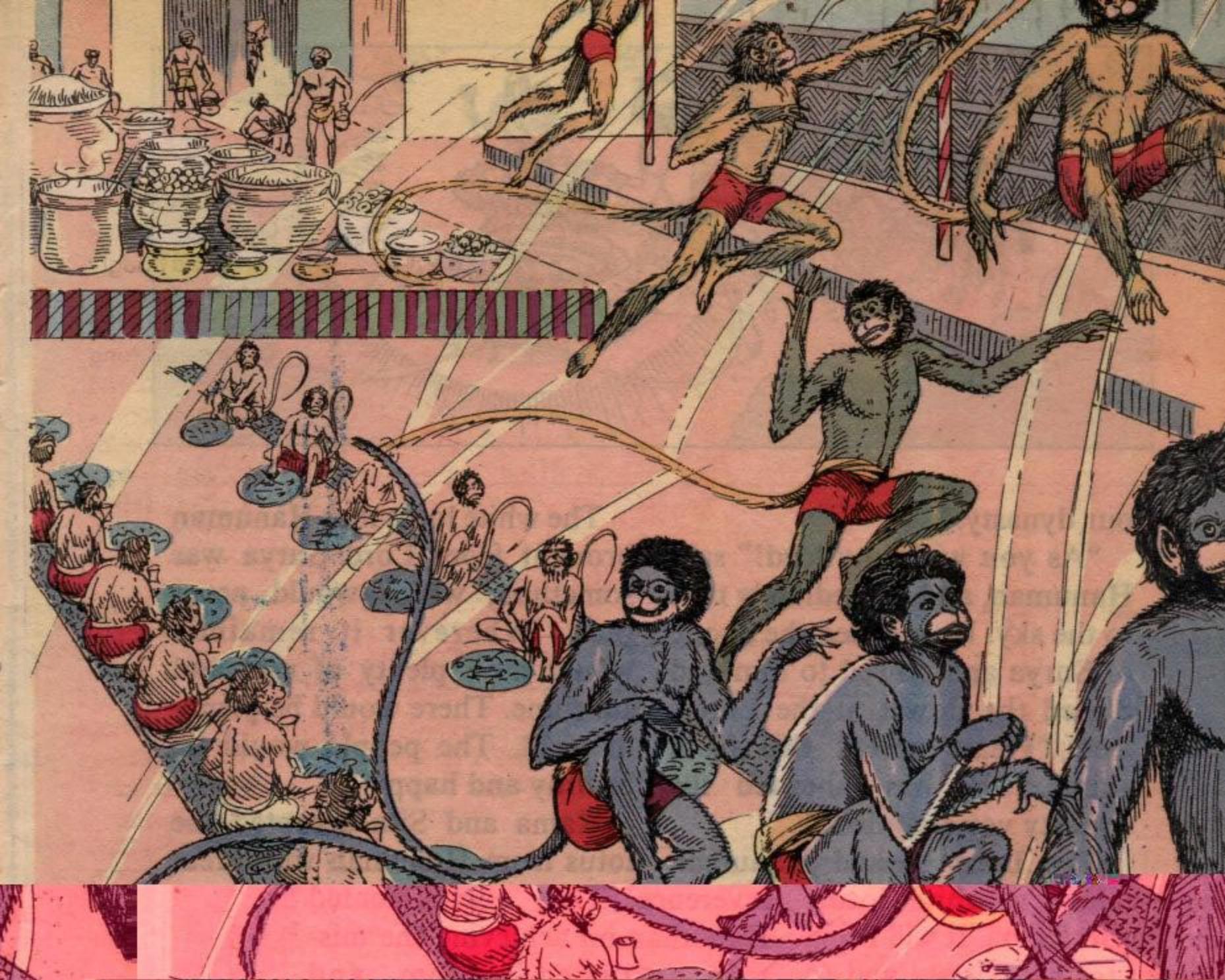
Rama, who had come there to enquire after the guests, turned to Hanuman. "When all the others are jumping and making merry, why did you stop with one jump?"

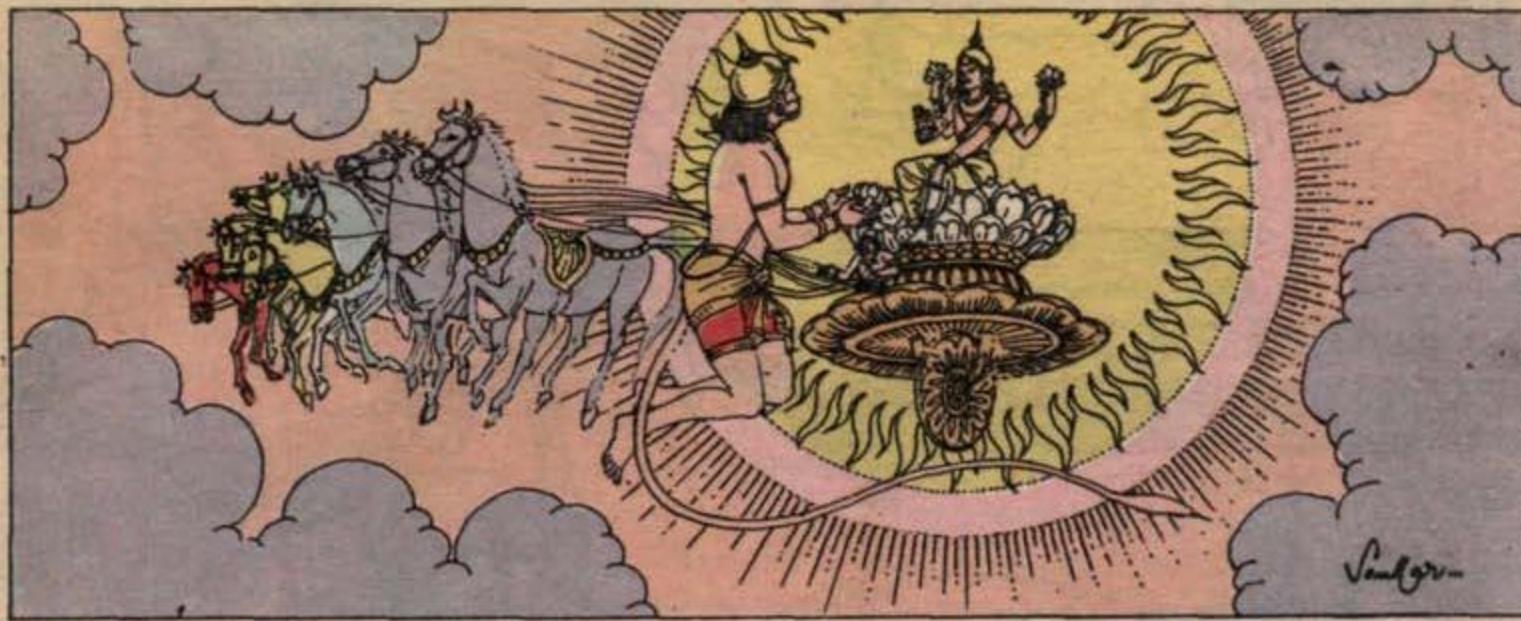
"Oh! They're all young and strong," replied Hanuman. "After all, I'm getting old."

Jambavan had a better answer to Rama's query. "Hanuman doesn't know his real strength. Every time someone will have to remind him!"

Rama then brought a white lotus and handed it to Hanuman saying, "Please go and give it to Lord Surya, the progenitor of







our dynasty."

"As you wish, my lord!" said Hanuman, and immediately rose to the sky. He reached the abode of Surya and bowed to him and placed the flower at the Lord's feet. "Please accept this from Rama, who has inherited the dynasty you founded!"

The Lord blessed Hanuman and gave him a white lotus. "Hand this to Rama. It will bring prosperity to the dynasty and to the country he has inherited from his father, Dasaratha. The people of Ayodhya will live in peace!"

The white lotus that Hanuman brought from Lord Surya was something which would never fade. Wherever it remained would have plenty of rain and sunshine. There would be plenty of yield. The people would be healthy and happy.

Rama and Sita accepted the lotus from Hanuman with great reverence. They complimented Hanuman on achieving the mission entrusted to him, and showered their affection and blessings on him.

—To continue

No battle is more sorely lost than the one not fought.

No one is rich enough to do without a neighbour.

No pillow is as soft as clear conscience.





New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

POEMS FOR PLEASURE

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You seem to have taken a vow. But mind you, sometimes people who are so determined in He was humble and travelled to





their objective may fail to abide by it till the end. We've an example in poet Indusekhar. He boasted that he would never write poems to earn money. He would compose poetry only to satisfy his pleasure. And he went about writing poems sarcastic of others. However, before long he had to give up his vow and became a slave to money. You would better hear the full story." The vampire then narrated the story of Indusekhar.

Kanchanpuri was once ruled by Garudavarma. He was not arrogant like many other kings.

all corners of the kingdom enquiring about the welfare of his subjects, to whom he endeared himself. None had ever seen Garudavarma losing his temper. People found him mild-mannered and peace-loving.

Indusekhar was a popular poet of Kanchanpuri. His poems drew admiration and appreciation because most of them were light-hearted, humorous and sarcastic. There were many people whom he never spared and who were subjected to his ridicule.

One day, the poet laureate, Kaladas, arrived in the village where Indusekhar stayed. A rich man of the place, Dhansekhar, received him with due respect. During their conversation, Dhansekhar had an opportunity to mention of Indusekhar and his poems. When Kaladas heard Dhansekhar praising another poet, he was eager to meet him. Dhansekhar sent him to Indusekhar with an escort. Kaladas expressed his wish to listen to his poems.

"O! Dhansekhar obviously has been talking about me!" said Indusekhar with a smile. "I hope



you haven't believed all that he told you. He and Manikyavarma don't see eye to eye with each other. I wrote a sarcastic poem about Manikyavarma. Dhansekhar, like many others, liked it. That's why he's praising me. Suppose I had written a similar poem on Dhansekhar himself; would he have praised me? I doubt."

"He did tell me about your high regard for him and of the poems reflecting your feelings," remarked Kaladas. "Why don't you write poems in praise of our king and earn from him rewards and awards? You can then lead a very comfortable life." To which Indusekhar replied: "I've the greatest respect for King Garudavarma. I don't wish to belittle him by writing poems about him."

Kaladas did not pursue the subject. After listening to his poems for some time, he took leave of Indusekhar and returned to the capital. The next day he met the king during the *durbar* and told him all about Indusekhar.

Garudavarma sent messengers to Indusekhar, asking him to



come to the palace. When he was ushered into the presence of the king, Garudavarma complimented him on his popularity and asked him to join his *durbar* and write poems to please the king. "If you'll agree, I shall even make you another poet laureate. Even if you don't wish that status, please remain in the capital; I shall see that you lead a comfortable life," he assured Indusekhar.

"Your Majesty! I shall write poems for your pleasure, but on one condition. You must listen to them first; others will hear them





only later," replied Indusekhar.

Garudavarma would not accept that condition. "No, Indusekhar. I would prefer to listen to them in the *durbar*, along with all others. Only then would I get the maximum pleasure."

Indusekhar was, however, adamant and ultimately the king had to agree to the poet's condition. One day, he recited his poem to the king. The poem was about the cook who cooked for the royal cook. "I was surprised when I came to know of this," stated Indusekhar in his poem.

"The greater surprise was when I noticed that *you* relished the dishes prepared by your cook's cook! Probably, the royal cook is not happy with his own cooking. That's why he has appointed a cook for himself!"

The king laughed heartily. Later, Indusekhar recited the poem in the *durbar* much to the amusement of the courtiers.

Garudavarma had four ministers, all of whom enjoyed his confidence. He never took a decision without consulting them. The chief among them was Veerasen. People used to describe him as a puppeteer and the king as a mere puppet in his hands.

Indusekhar's poem on Chief Minister Veerasen ran on these lines: "He made the king do something which he did not like. However, it only brought fame to the king. So, he called his minister and presented him with a golden bowl. But Veerasen would not accept such a costly gift. He told the king he would take only something less costly. 'When everybody else wishes for the costliest gift,' the king asked of his minister, 'why should you



prefer only a smaller one?"

"If it's a smaller gift, I can then give it to my wife!" replied the Chief Minister. The king prompted the minister, 'Then, why don't you accept the bigger gift and pass it on to your wife yourself?' 'Your majesty, the suggestion had come from my wife herself, that's why she deserves only a smaller gift!"'

Garudavarma listened to the poem with great attention. "That's good! So, you wish to tell me through your poem that Veerasen is someone who'll go by his wife's wishes?" He laughed aloud.

Balasen was another minister.

He was in charge of the army. He was very strict about the soldiers' training. Even his voice would give them a fright. Contrary to what his name meant—a strong man—Balasen looked a weakling. Indusekhar referred to this in his poem about the minister. "Look at our king's kindness! He has a strong army to protect his subjects. He has a strong army even to protect the lean and lanky Balasen!"

Garudavarma appreciated the poem, and eagerly awaited the next poem from Indusekhar. He picked on yet another minister—





Nagasesen, who was very kind-hearted and would be upset if he were to find someone suffering—mentally or physically—and shed tears like little children. He was childless.

The poem referred to a visit paid by Indusekhar to Nagasesen. "The poet found the minister weeping uncontrollably. His wife had an explanation. 'He's crying because I haven't borne him a child,'" The king liked the implied humour in the poem.

Garudavarma's fourth minister, Sivasen, was younger than the other ministers. There was

practically no need for a fourth minister, and he was given little or no work by the king, who appeared quite fond of the youngster. He had once rescued the king from a snake, which bit Sivasen instead. But before its poison could affect the youth, the king arranged for his treatment. As a gesture of his gratitude to Sivasen, the king made him a minister.

Indusekhar's poem on Sivasen centred round this incident. "One day, Sivasen was playing Snakes-and-Ladders. The day was Vai-kunta Ekadasi, when the Lord Himself met with his death. The dice counted up to a snake on the board and Sivasen's partner reminded him that his coin would have to climb down to the tail. Sivasen brushed aside his partner and said, 'The snake is actually a ladder for me.'" This was an indirect reference to the favour shown by the king to Sivasen.

Garudavarma's face reddened. Was Indusekhar mocking at him through his poem? the king wondered.

"Indusekhar! Till today I respected you as a poet of competence," said the king angrily. "I



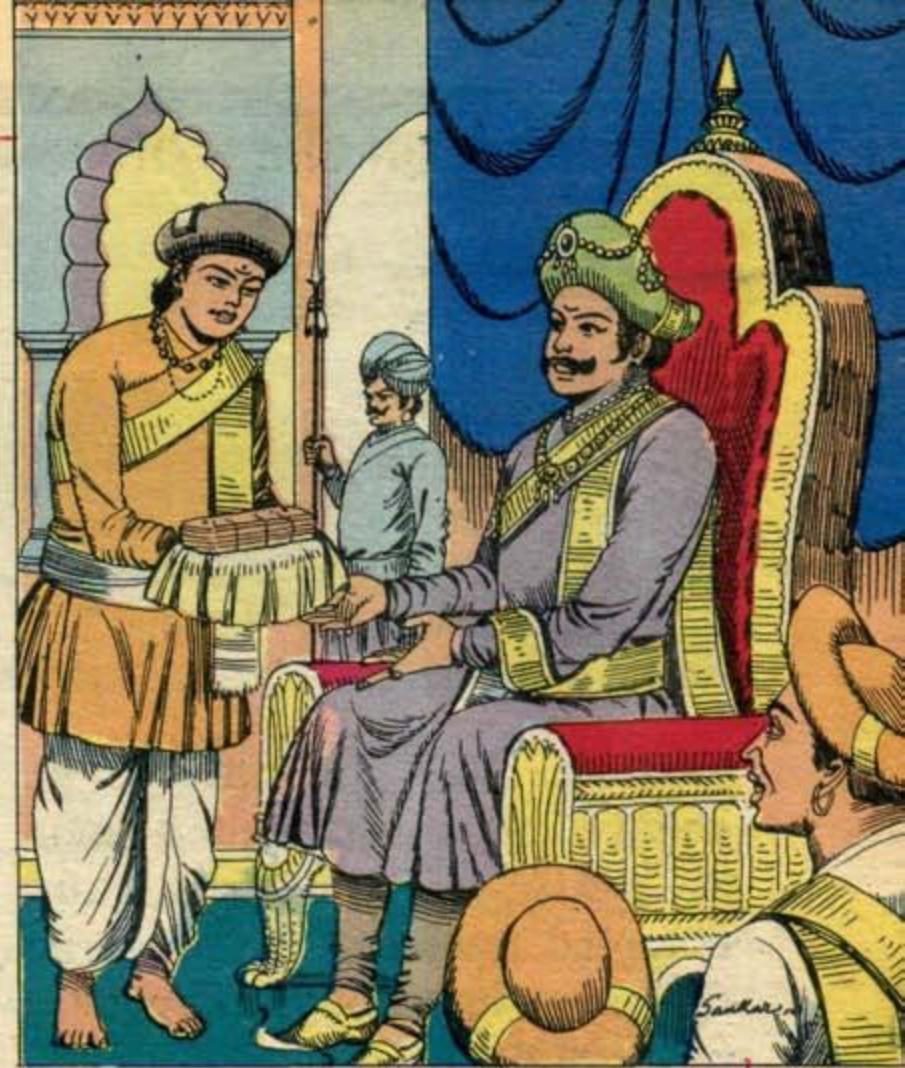
thought your poems were clever compositions. But today I realise what your objective is. You're ready to go down to any level to heap insult on others! You feel Sivasen is a worthless person, do you? It's not true. You've no idea how useful he's to me and how much I value his advice."

Indusekhar was flabbergasted. But he did not show his surprise in front of the king. "Your majesty, may I have your permission to read this in the *durbar*?"

"If you read it in the *durbar*," the king warned the poet, "the shame will be on you! Moreover, Sivasen will feel hurt. So, I would ask you to write another poem in praise of him and you may read that in the *durbar*."

"I'm sorry, your majesty has failed to appreciate my poem," said Indusekhar politely. "I can't write another poem about minister Sivasen. If you don't mind, O King, I shall compose a poem in praise of you. After that I propose to return to my village."

The king found him adamant. Indusekhar wrote an epic poem, calling it "Glory to Garudavarma!" Naturally, the king was mightily pleased and smothered



him with rewards and gifts. Indusekhar went back to his village.

The vampire ended the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! As long as the king appreciated his poems, Indusekhar continued to ridicule others. But the moment the king found fault with his poem, the poet refused to write any more. Remember, the poet laureate Kaladas had once asked Indusekhar why he shouldn't write poems in praise of the king and earn rewards. At that time, Indusekhar pooh-poohed the very sug-





gestion. But ultimately, he changed his stance, wrote a poem in praise of the king, and accepted rewards. Did he write that poem in fear of the king or in expectation of rewards? If you know the answer, O King, and yet remain silent, be forewarned that your head will be blown to pieces!"

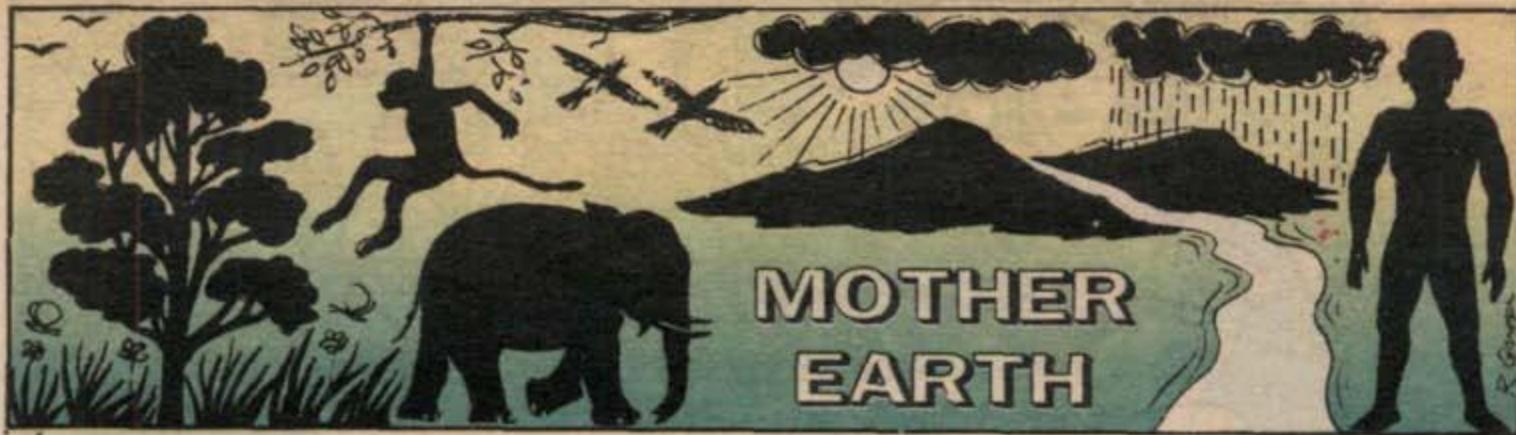
Vikramaditya had a ready answer. "Indusekhar composed only those poems that he liked to. He never wanted to recite his poems in front of the public. He wrote poems on three of the ministers and the king appreciated them because the poems mentioned their shortcomings.

However, when the fourth poem slighted minister Sivasen who had saved the life of the king, he was furious with the poet, who all along believed that the king was impartial. But Indusekhar knew that Garudavarma was given to favouritism when the king expressed his displeasure. That's why he composed a poem in praise of the king to please him. He did not expect to be rewarded. That was not his aim."

The vampire realised that he had been outsmarted by the king. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and followed the vampire.

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THOSE BEAUTIFUL "PEOPLE"

When we look at the world of animals, we cannot but wonder at the creative power inherent in Nature. How much of variety is there in that world! In how many shapes and colours, in how many kinds of texture of skin and how different gaits—that creative power has found its expression!

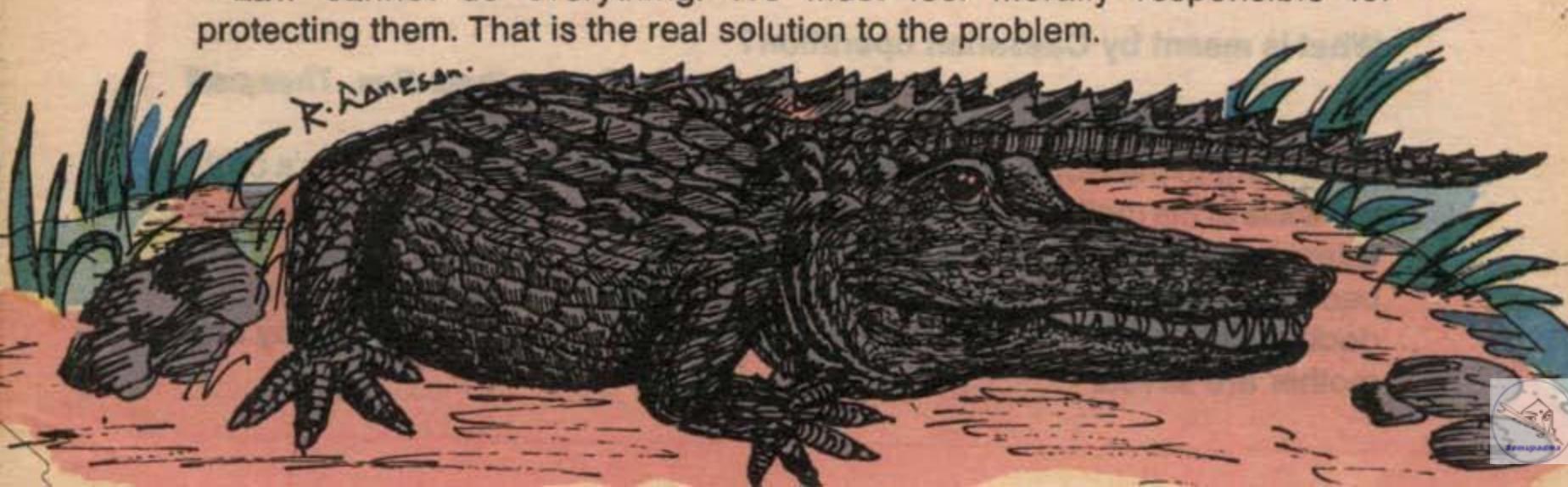
As the famous English novelist, George Eliot, said, "Animals are such agreeable friends—they ask no questions, they pass no criticism."

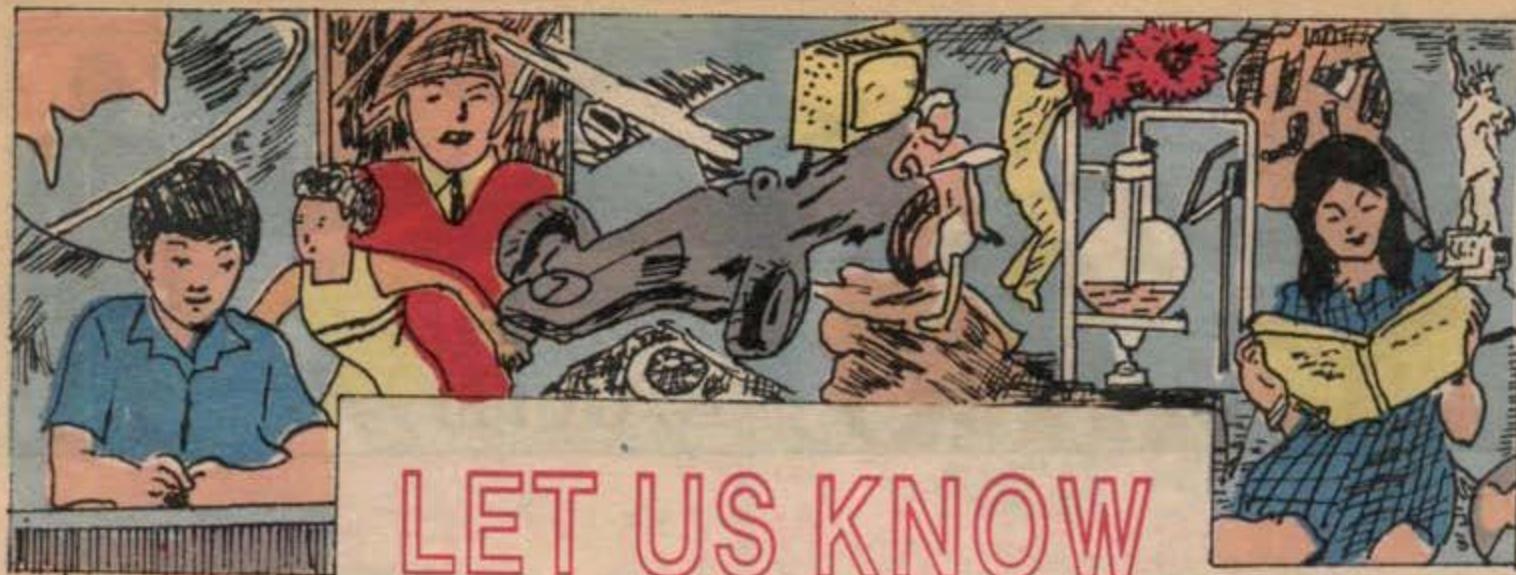
But the modern man has been very ungrateful towards these agreeable friends. The animals lived on the earth before man was born. But man has destroyed their home—the forest. How long could they live without their homes? So many species of animals have perished; the number of those who have survived is dwindling.

The other factors which have irreparably harmed the animals is pollution, use of chemical pesticides and hunting. A world without animals? It will be a dull world indeed. Unless special care is taken to preserve the animal species, a time may come when animals will be found only in the zoo.

Yes, care does pay. For example, hunting had reduced the alligators to such a miserable number that not even one of them would have survived to see the 21st century. But special measures taken to protect them have now increased their number.

Law cannot do everything. We must feel morally responsible for protecting them. That is the real solution to the problem.





LET US KNOW

What is a limerick?

—U. Jagadeesh, Pamulapadu

Limerick is a verse consisting of only five lines with rhymes—the first, second, and fifth lines having one rhyme, and the third and fourth lines having another rhyme. It is generally epigrammatic, often humorous, sometimes indecent, too! It took its origin at a place with the same name—a county in Ireland—where a group of people would gather to compose the verses extempore. It was Edward Lear (1812-88) who popularised this nonsense verse. His *Book of Nonsense* came out in 1846.

What is the difference between “warrior” and “soldier”?

—Padma Charan Jena, Puri

A soldier is a member of an army who is paid to fight. A warrior is a fighting man who is not a mercenary. The word denotes a quality or the character of the person.

What is meant by Caesarian operation?

—Paramdham Das, Thenpalli

According to the Roman historian, Pliny, at the time of Julius Caesar's birth, the walls of his mother's stomach had to be cut through to deliver the baby. A Caesarian (not Caezerian) operation is resorted to when natural birth becomes difficult because of certain physiological problems, and the doctors cut open the stomach to pull out the baby. Thus, both the baby and mother are saved.

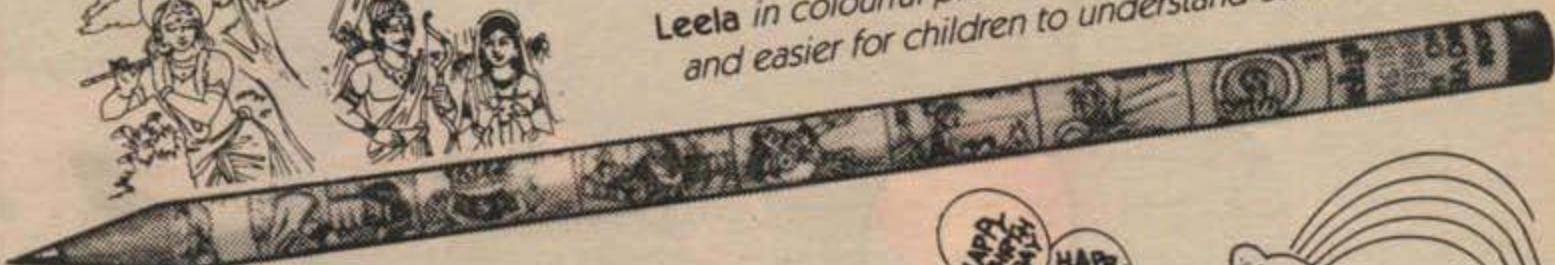


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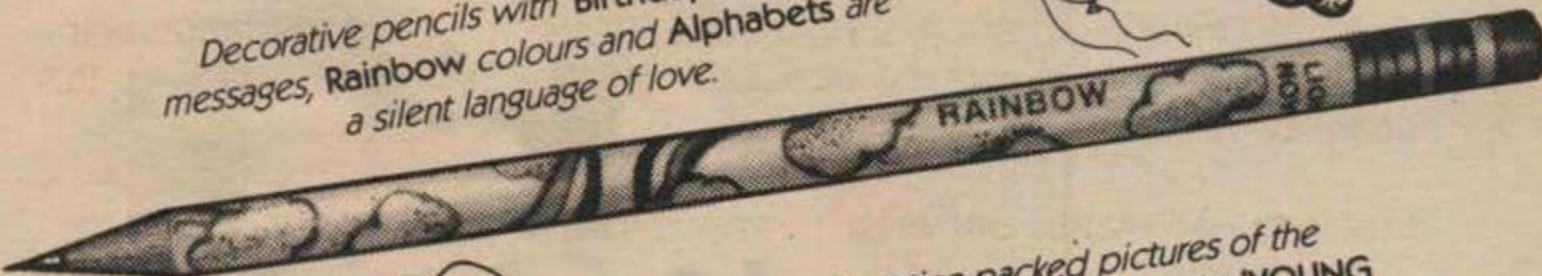
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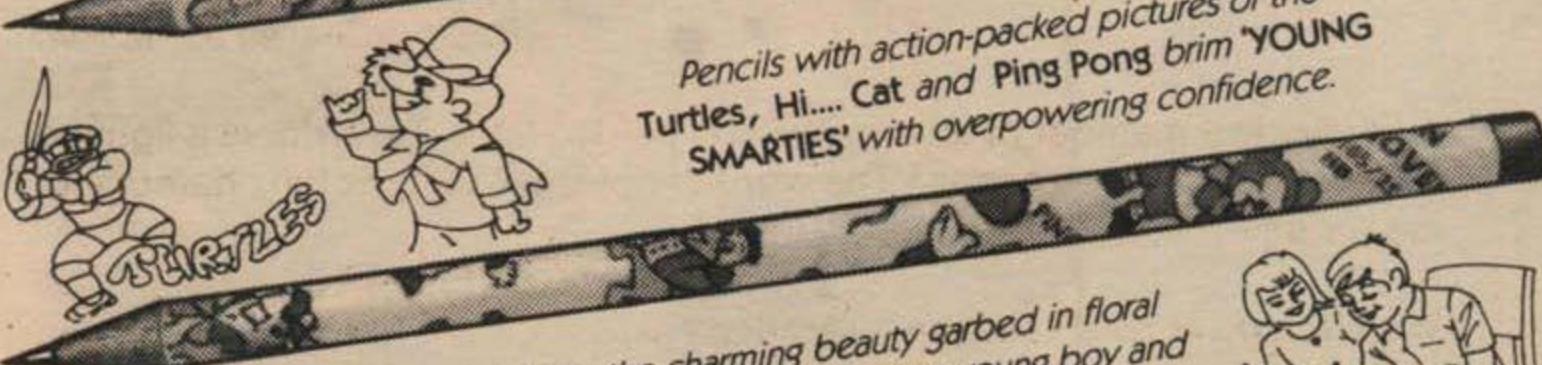
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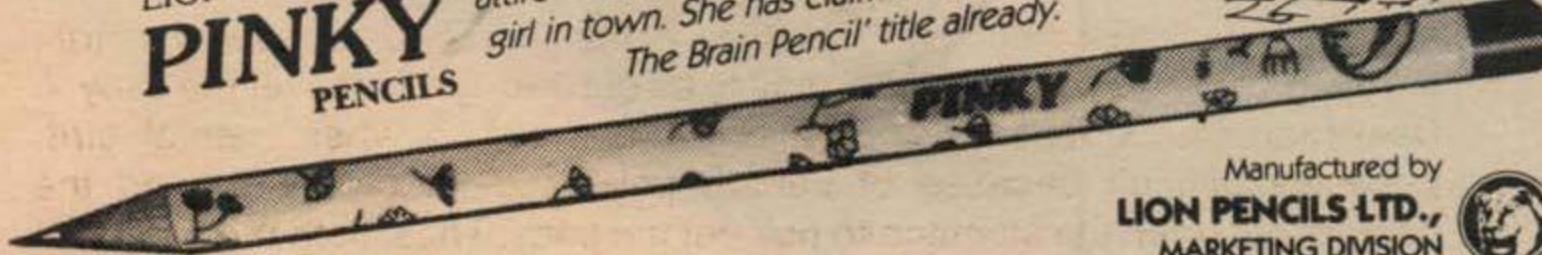


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PICKS FROM THE WISE

Vice flourishes in darkness. It vanishes in the light of day.

—Mahatma Gandhi

He whom the gods love die young.

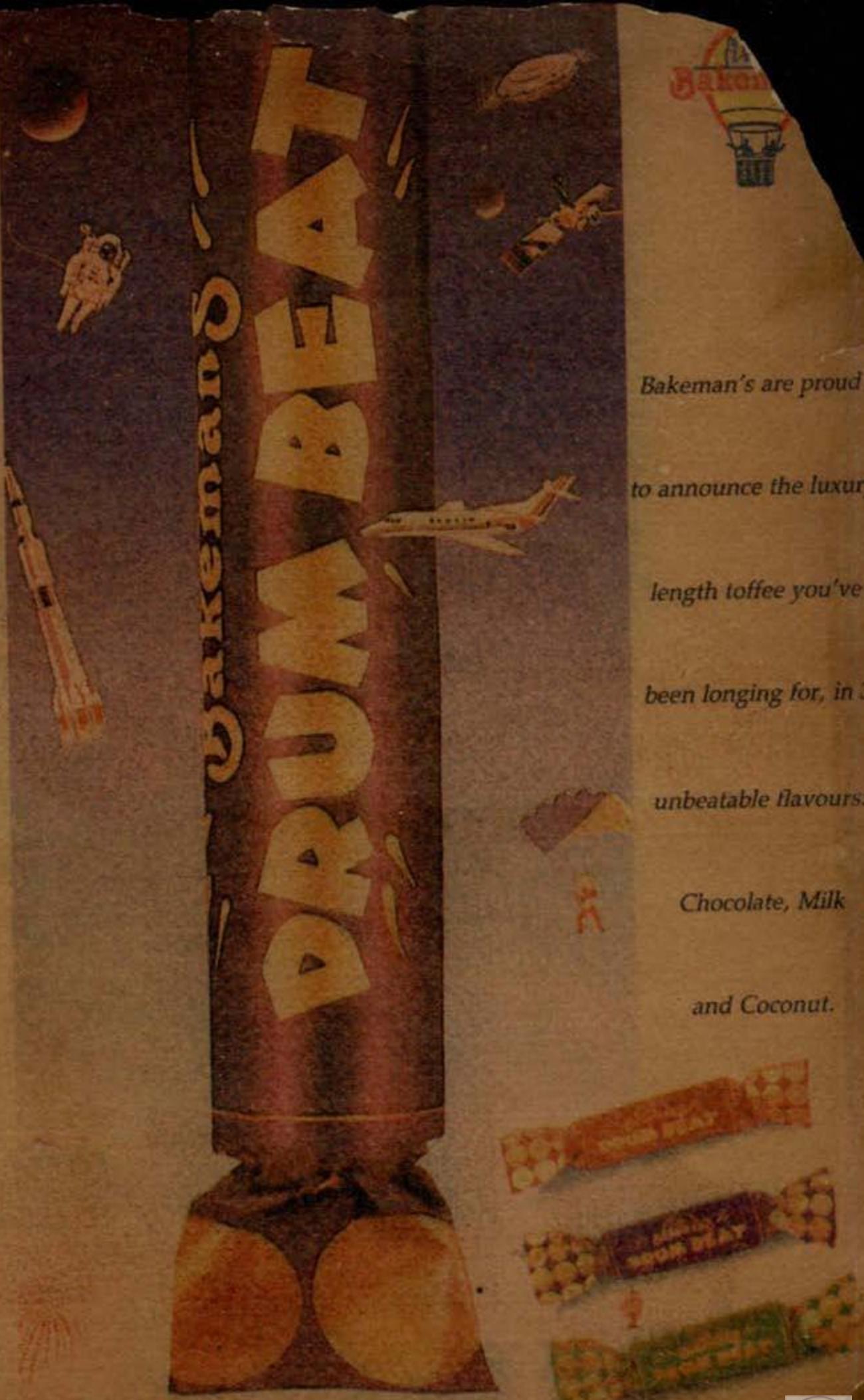
—Menander

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—Victor Hugo



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BREAK
A KOKONUT
IN YOUR
MOUTH



KOKANAKA KOOKIES



Tropical
Indulge in the
setting sun.

